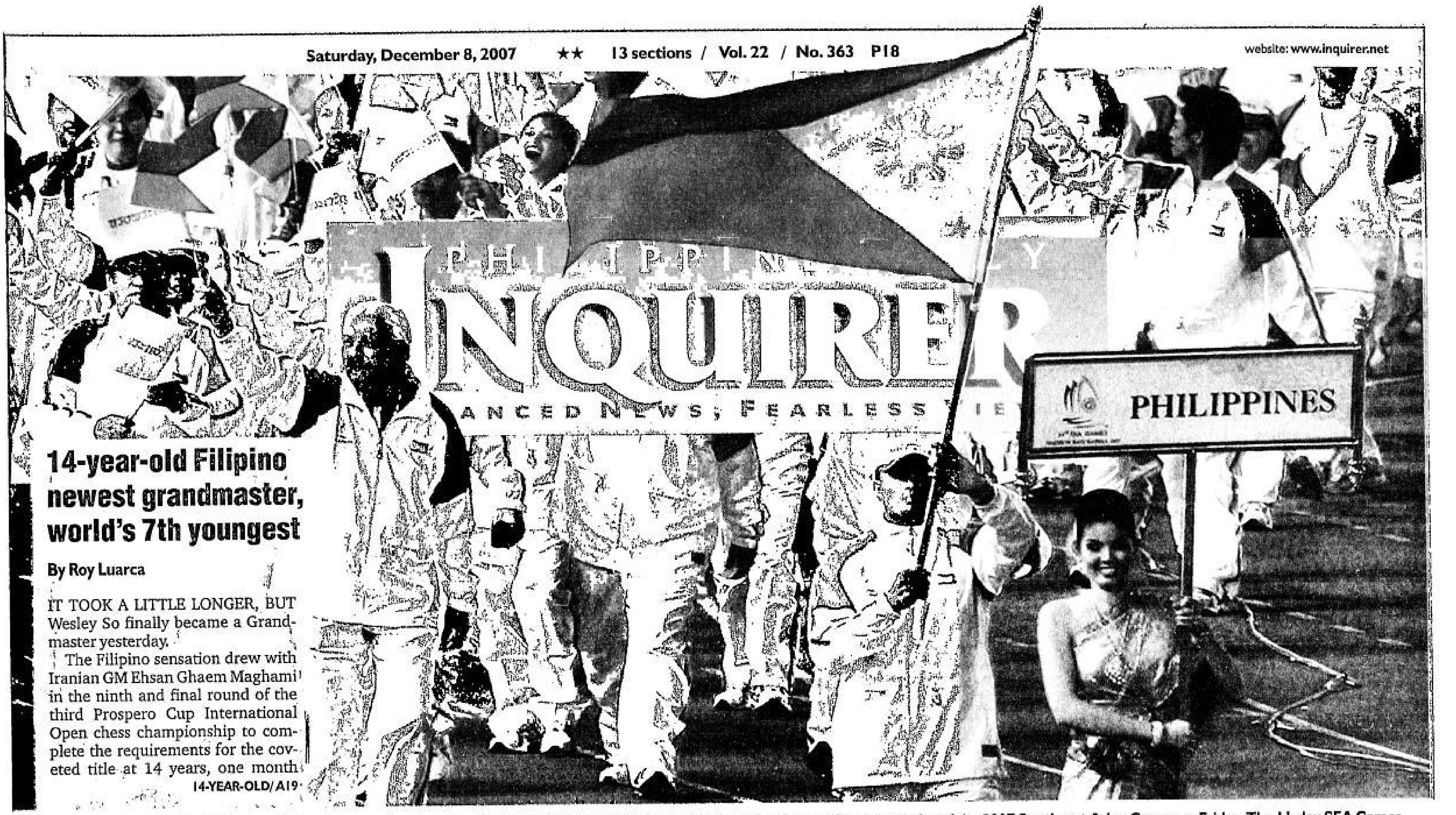
Saturday, December 8, 2007 ★★ 13 sections / Vol. 22 / No. 363 P18 website: www.inquirer.net

INQUIRER



14-year-old Filipino newest grandmaster, world's 7th youngest

By Roy Luarca

IT TOOK A LITTLE LONGER, BUT Wesley So finally became a Grandmaster yesterday.

The Filipino sensation drew with Iranian GM Ehsan Ghaem Maghami in the ninth and final round of the third Prospero Cup International Open chess championship to complete the requirements for the coveted title at 14 years, one month

14-YEAR-OLD/ A19

RAISE HIGH THE FLAG: The Philippine delegation parades down the stadium in Nakhon Ratchasima, Thailand, for the opening ceremonies of the 2007 Southeast Asian Games on Friday. The 11-day SEA Games started on Thursday to coincide with the 80th birthday of the Thais' beloved king. RAFFY LERMA

Gov't loses case vs Tan

SC: Sequestration order 'null and void'

By Leila B. Salaverria

TOBACCO TYCOON LUCIO TAN SCORED A MAjor victory against the government after the Supreme Court upheld a Sandiganbayan ruling that there was no basis for the seizure of Tan's assets in four companies, including his flagship Fortune Tobacco Corp., in 1986.

In upholding the Sandiganbayan ruling in favor of Tan and several others, the high court said the Presidential Commission on Good Government failed to show that it had evidence that the shares in the companies were ill-gotten before it issued the sequestration orders.

The high court said it found that the PCGG—the agency created in 1986 to recover the ill-gotten assets of the late dictator Ferdinand Marcos, his family and his cronies—had no sufficient reason to take over the shares.

"There is no evidence presented by petitioner that they belong to the Government of the Philippines or any of its branches, instrumentalities, enterprises, banks or financial institutions.

"Nor is there evidence that respondents, taking undue advantage of their connections or relationship with former President Marcos or his family, relatives and close associates, were able to acquire those shares of stock," the high court said in its Dec. 7 decision.

The Supreme Court was acting on a petition from the PCGG

GOV'T LOSES/ A9

Rape victim 'very upset' over Jalosjos' release plan

By Leila B. Salaverria and Beverly T. Natividad

SHE WAS 11 YEARS OLD WHEN she was raped. Now, in her 20s and working somewhere, she is angry again.

"She has e-mailed the DSWD (Department of Social Welfare and Development). She's very upset. She can't believe it's happening," lawyer Katrina Legarda said of her former ward. "*Wala na siya magagawa* (There's nothing she can do anymore)."

Legarda was referring to the girl whose court testimony con-

RAPE VICTIM/ A10

PRESIDENT Arroyo and husband Jose Miguel Arroyo are received by the British monarch, Queen Elizabeth II, at Buckingham Palace in central London. Ms Arroyo ended her official visit in the UK on Thursday, and with her family returned to Spain for a private visit. AP

GMA to Kuwait trying to save OFW

By Michael Lim Ubac

LONDON (VIA PLDT)—PRESIdent Macapagal-Arroyo may yet save Marilou Ranario's life, but the President's lips are sealed, for now.

Ms Arroyo yesterday decided to cut short her and her family's planned two-day private visit to Spain, scheduled for Dec. 7 to 8, to be able to personally appeal the case of Ranario, the overseas worker who has been sentenced to die by hanging for the fatal stabbing of her employer.

Ms Arroyo and the emir of Kuwait, Shaikh Jaber Al Ahmed Al Sabah, will meet Sunday in Kuwait. She is expected to plead for the life of the 33-year-old teacher, who worked in that countty as a domestic helper.

Previously, it was uncertain if Ms Arroyo would push through with her trip to Kuwait.

Yesterday, she confirmed the trip, politely nodding after she was .asked by reporters if she was flying to Kuwait.

She did not elaborate but she was beaming while she was being led out of the Dorchester Hotel, where she had spoken before top British businessmen about the improving business climate in the Philippines.

On Wednesday, Press Secretary Ignacio Bunye had told reporters covering the presidential visits to Spain and the United Kingdom that the Kuwait trip would not push through.

Then, the following day, Bunye said that "it's a go," but he would not comment on the pos-

GMA GOING/ A10

Lim: I was forced to join Trillanes

By DJ Yap and Nikko Dizon

BRIG. GEN. DANILO LIM SAYS he was "forcibly dragged out" of court to join the Trillanes walkout.

He has asked the Makati court hearing the rebellion case against the Trillanes group that took over portions of the Peninsula Manila on Nov. 29 to order his return to the Camp Capinpin custodial center in Tanay, Rizal, where he was originally detained.

Lim, who had joined the group

GENERAL LIM/ A8

Cops block Palace march; farmers weep

By Allison W. Lopez

FARMERS WHO HAD marched 1,700 kilometers to call the government's attention to their claim to an estate in Sumilao, Bukidnon, wept in frustration yesterday as police blocked their attempt to reach Malacañang.

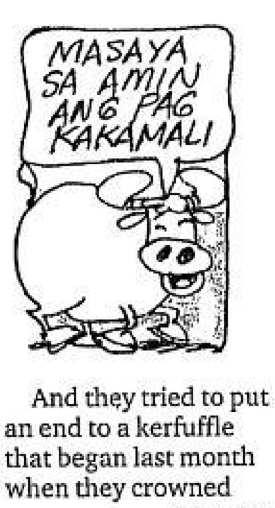
Sunburned and exhausted, the farmers, including Hilda San Ahan, 58, the oldest in the group, sat on the pavement of Ramon Magsaysay Boulevard near A.H. Lacson Street and waited to be allowed to proceed. Around 30 Manila policemen bearing shields stopped them from crossing over to the J.P. Laurel gate at around 11:30 a.m.

The farmers had walked from the central office of the Department of Agrarian Reform (DAR)

COPS/ A18

After accounting mixup, '1/4 Filipino' is Miss California

BEVERLY HILLS, California—In the business of crowning beauty queens, there's one thing you'd think they'd get right: Crowning the right beauty queen. Miss California USA organizers say they got that wrong, but corrected themselves Thursday by crowning Miss Barstow, Raquel Beezley, a 21-year-old waitress they said rightfully earned the title.


MASAYA SA AMIN ANG PAG KAKAMALI

And they tried to put an end to a kerfuffle that began last month when they crowned

AFTER/ A18

Luminous Cross rising in small Quezon town on wings of hope, prayer

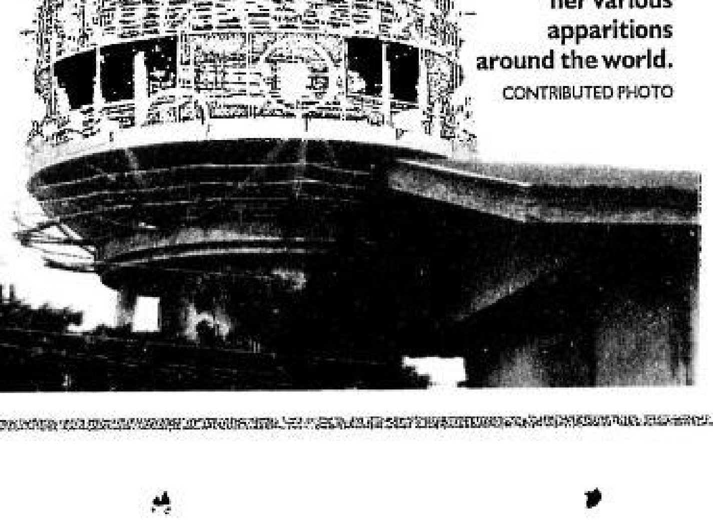
By Ruby Villavicencio-Paurom

SLOWLY AND STEADFASTLY, A PRAYER tower rises in a small town in Quezon.

What was then deemed impossible to build in this poor coastal town of Agdangan in the Bondoc Peninsula, a monstrance-shaped, 37-meter-high sanctuary, called the Luminous Cross of Grace, rises after three years of hope, prayers and thanksgiving for donors and service contributors.

Constructed beside the St. Isidore Parish Church, the prayer tower juts into the sky, a testament to the perseverance and faith of a

LUMINOUS/ A8



A MONSTRANCE-SHAPED 120-foot tower now dominates the landscape of the poor coastal town of Agdangan in Quezon. The cross on the dome that rises seven meters high is luminous with five images of Mary in her various apparitions around the world. CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

A jab at Trillanes was dying writer's last literary gasp

By Gerry Plaza
Contributor

A SERIOUS JAB AT "ADVENturist" Sen. Antonio Trillanes IV was his last literary gasp.

Rene O. Villanueva, award-winning writer of "Batibot," the Philippines' "Sesame Street," despite his failing health, made one final entry in his personal blog, expressing disdain for the latest Trillanes caper at the Peninsula Manila on Nov. 29.

According to his entry, he roused from his sickbed to

A JAB/ A9

WEATHER FORECAST

FORECAST: Eastern Luzon will experience cloudy skies with scattered rainshowers. The rest of the country will have partly cloudy to at times cloudy skies with isolated rainshowers or thunderstorms.

Metro Manila	Partly Cloudy	Iloilo/Bacolod	Partly Cloudy
Baguio	Partly Cloudy	Roxas	Partly Cloudy
Tuguegarao	Cloudy with Rains	Cebu	Partly Cloudy
Laoag	Partly Cloudy	Tacloban	Partly Cloudy
Clark Zone	Partly Cloudy	Gen. Santos	Partly Cloudy
Tagaytay	Partly Cloudy	Zamboanga	Partly Cloudy
Legazpi	Cloudy with Rains	Cagayan de Oro	Partly Cloudy
Calapan	Partly Cloudy	Davao	Partly Cloudy

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RP back in business – GMA

'Sick man of Asia' not afraid of globalization, says Arroyo

By Michael Lim Ubac

LONDON (VIA PLDT)—THE Philippines is no longer afraid of globalization, President Macapagal-Arroyo declared here late Thursday at the close of her week-long official visit to Spain and the United Kingdom.

The country, which less than a decade ago was referred to as "the sick man of Asia," was back in business, and the world has taken notice, Ms Arroyo said.

She invited European investors to visit the Philippines to "see for yourself the dynamism that now describes our country today."

"We are a good business environment but we are getting better," she said, eliciting applause from top British investors here led by HSBC's Robert Gray who said the Arroyo administration's determination to "bring prosperity to your people is praised worldwide."

The first one to respond to her call was Indian steel magnate Pramod Mittal who finally gave the go-signal for the implementation of a P1.6-billion integrated steel plant in the Philippines, a project that was announced during the state visit she made to India last October.

Mittal's Ispat Industries, acquired Global Steelworks Phil., the former National Steel Corp., in 2004 for $225 million. Based in Iligan City, it is the country's largest steel mill with an annual output of three million metric tons, supplying cold rolled coils and flat steel products to the Philippines and other countries.

Ms Arroyo arrived in London late Wednesday from a four-day state visit to Spain, which began Dec. 2. She met King Juan Carlos I and Queen Sofia, and generated P16.2 billion in fresh investments for the Philippines.

She addressed two separate business forums during her one-day visit to London, during which she cited the many positive developments in the Philippine business scene that have caught the attention of global investors.

She regaled the London business community with the bright prospects awaiting investors in mining, energy, tourism, business process outsourcing, infrastructure and agriculture-related projects in the Philippines.

"I believe that Philippines offers one of the best values in Asia for domestic and foreign investments," she said.

She pointed out that the Philippine economy has reached a "new level of maturity and stability, with some of the strongest macro-economic fundamentals in 20 years."

She cited the huge investments by such international business giants as Texas Instruments of the United States, Hanjin of Korea, Marubeni of Japan are pouring in. Together with Anglo-Dutch Shell Co., they form the "Billion Club" of investors who have sunk in at least a billion dollars in their Philippine operations, the President said.

'I'm a very bad politician'

LONDON (VIA PLDT)—PRESIDENT Macapagal-Arroyo has weathered countless political storms since assuming power in 2001, but she told British investors here that she is a bad politician.

"I think I'm a pretty good economist, but a very bad politician," the US-educated economist said in a speech at an investors' forum here which capped her one-day working visit to the United Kingdom.

Ms Arroyo said she was focusing on the economy "because it has to be done, and also because on a personal level, as an economist, that's my zone of comfort."

"And whatever you may read in the headlines about the Philippines, be assured that we don't satisfy long-term gains for short-term political expediency. That's the meaning of being focused on the economy," she told investors.

The President explained to global investors based in the British capital that last week's failed Makati coup signaled an end to the era of mutinies and power grabs.

She said that there would be no more threats to her presidency until the end of her presidency in 2010.

She said the Filipino people wanted order, stability and economic progress, and "that's what they're getting now." *Michael Lim Ubac*

WHAT'S INSIDE

US DELAYS deportation of prominent RP couple /A4

CHEAP medicine bill will pass /A6

Hunt other Pen rebels, PNP told

By Christine O. Avendaño

PRESIDENT MACAPAGAL-ARROYO yesterday ordered the police and military to continue pursuing the other participants of the failed Nov. 29 revolt at the Peninsula Manila even as they assured her that the threat in the country had been "virtually handled."

From Sevilla, Spain where she was on a private visit, the President issued this and other directives in a video conference she held with her Cabinet national security cluster, who met at the Makati Shangri-la hotel.

"We must remain vigilant against groups exploiting grievances to grab power for their own selfish ambitions," Ms Arroyo said in her opening statement at the meeting which was also aired live on government television and radio stations.

The Chief Executive also ordered the officials to review security measures in the country.

"People are grateful to our soldiers and policemen for defending democracy and the Constitution," she added.

Interior and Local Government Secretary Ronaldo Puno briefed Ms Arroyo, who left for Europe two days after the failed Nov. 29 revolt, that the "security situation in the country is good and we believed that the threat was virtually handled."

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POLYTRON

Philippine Quill Honors Globe's Efforts for OFW Families

In recognizing Mrs. Corazon Gaviola-Atuel, Mr. Oscar De Jesus, Jr. and Mrs. Virgencita Lagunsay as this year's Model OFW Family of the Year awardees, Globe Telecom found itself receiving an award as well. The prestigious 2007 Quill Award was recently given to the pioneering telecommunications company for its MOFYA campaign at the Philippine Quill's 35th Annual Awards night held at the Mandarin Oriental Manila.

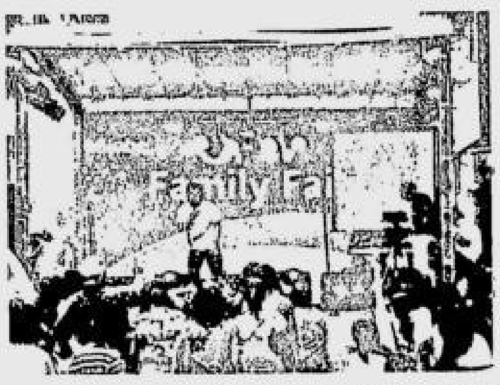
Winning the Award of Excellence in the 2007 Quill specifically on the category of economic, social & environment development, Globe executed its communication campaign through print ads, TV segment sponsorships and OWWA radio announcements & guestings on AM radio.

Globe's clear objectives, understanding of the target market, creative & effective communication efforts and, ultimately, the measurable results of the program's success impressed a jury of business executives and professionals throughout the industry.

Globe has long sought to recognize and demonstrate appreciation for OFW families, who have endured and thrived despite the struggle of being separated from their loved ones. With this in mind, Globe partnered with the Overseas Workers Welfare Administration (OWWA) to support OWWA's similar vision of recognizing the sacrifices of overseas workers, giving due credit to the OFWs and their families for the solid contribution they make to our country.

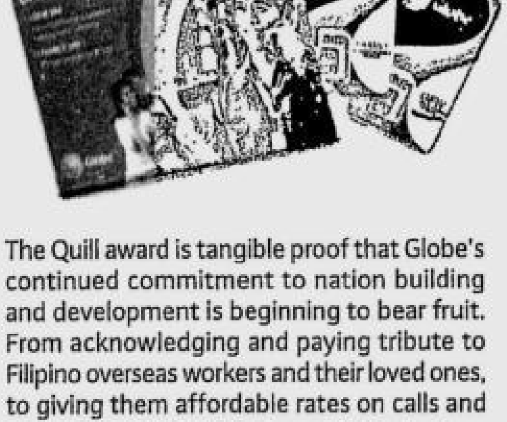
In addition to the MOFYA program, Globe continues to honor Filipino workers abroad and their relatives here at home through the annual Pamaskong handog program, the OFW Family Fairs. This event is a whole-day family affair providing entertainment, games, prizes & special gifts from Globe to overseas workers and their relatives, giving them, a truly happy and memorable Christmas reunion.

Globe bags a total of 12 awards at the 2007 Philippine Quill Awards held at the Mandarin Oriental Manila.

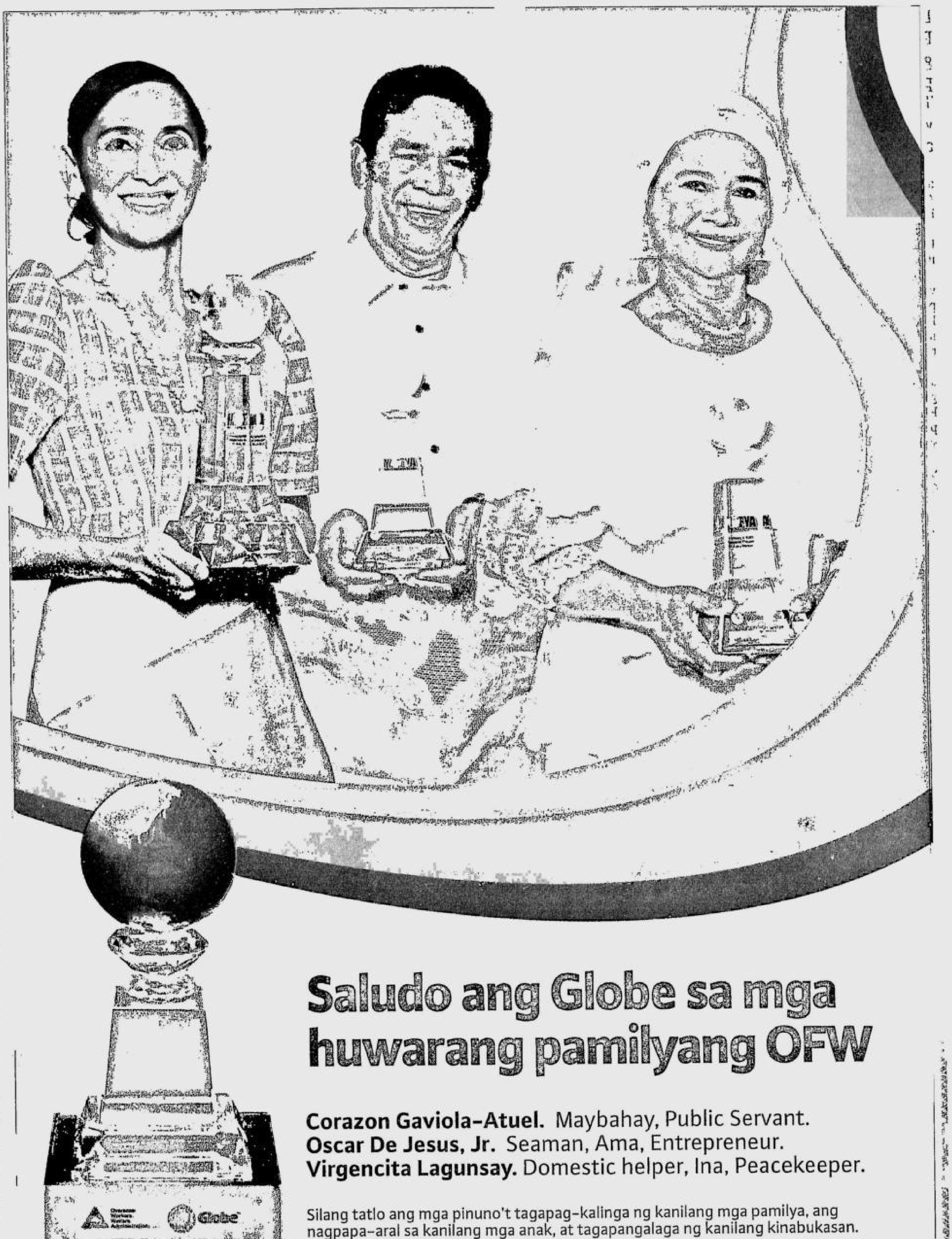


Moreover, Globe has developed a comprehensive series of events and offers to keep OFWs and their families connected during their stay. Upon arrival at the NAIA, OFW balikbayans are given the VIP Welcome treatment with the OFW Airport Salubong. President GMA herself will open the event, while TV celebrities are stationed at the NAIA along with Globe reps to give away Globe gift packs and special items to OFW balikbayans throughout the Christmas season.

Furthermore, Globe has developed the OFW Family Pack, the first 2-SIM bundle containing partner OFW and Family SIMs at an affordable cost. This product has been developed to ensure that OFW families stay connected despite the distance.



The Quill award is tangible proof that Globe's continued commitment to nation building and development is beginning to bear fruit. From acknowledging and paying tribute to Filipino overseas workers and their loved ones, to giving them affordable rates on calls and text messages that lift the spirit, Globe does everything possible to make everyday life easier, simpler and richer for all OFWs and their families.



MOFYA 2007
Model OFW Family of the Year Awards

Saludo ang Globe sa mga huwarang pamilyang OFW

Corazon Gaviola-Atuel. Maybahay, Public Servant.
Oscar De Jesus, Jr. Seaman, Ama, Entrepreneur.
Virgencita Lagunsay. Domestic helper, Ina, Peacekeeper.

Silang tatlo ang mga pinuno't tagapag-kalinga ng kanilang mga pamilya, ang nagpapa-aral sa kanilang mga anak, at tagapangalaga ng kanilang kinabukasan.

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sila rin ang nagsisilbing inspirasyon para sa ibang pamilya sa kanilang paligid.

At sa ating lahat.

Silang tatlo ang 2007 awardees ng Model OFW Family of The Year.
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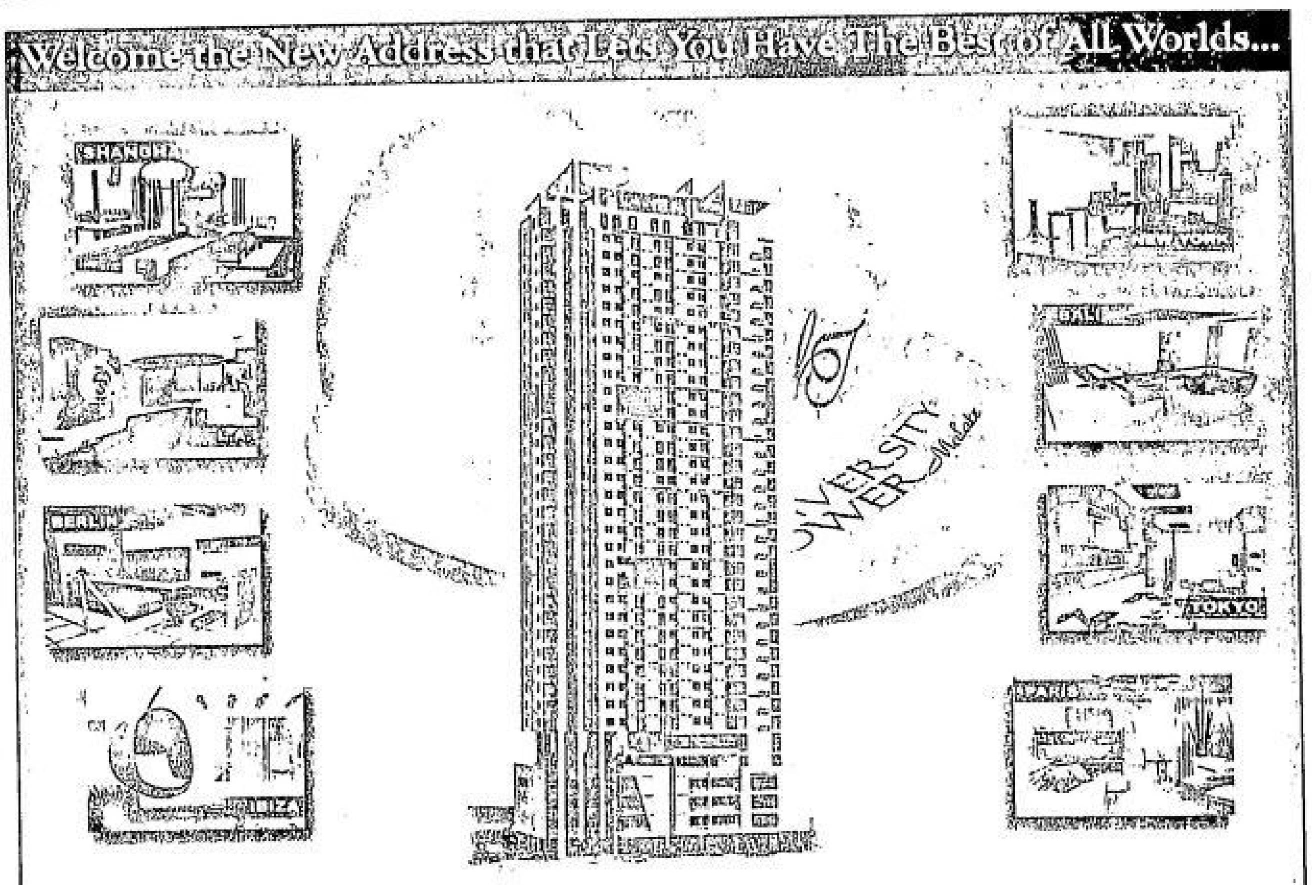

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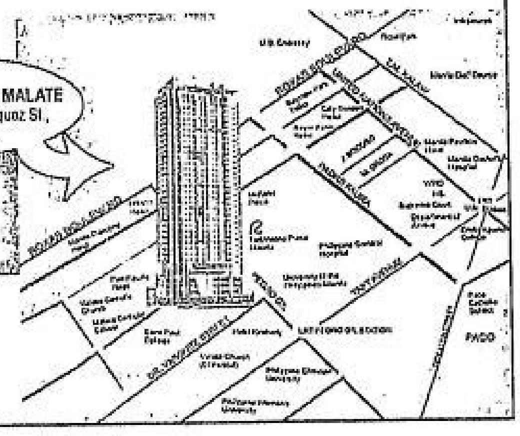

US delays deportation of prominent RP couple

PHILADELPHIA—FEDERAL OFFICIALS have temporarily stayed deportation proceedings for an immigrant doctor and his wife who had been ordered to go to the Philippines because of a long-ago error on their paperwork, the couple's attorney said.

Dr. Pedro Servano and his wife, Salvacion, of Selinsgrove, were granted their request for deferred action, which allows them to continue living and working in the US for an unspecified amount of time, lawyer Gregg Cotler said Thursday.

"This gives us formal delay and stay of the deportation," Cotler said.

Immigrations and Customs Enforcement spokesperson Michael Gilhooly confirmed that officials in Philadelphia granted the deferred action. Deportation proceedings for the Servanos had begun Nov. 26 after all their appeals were exhausted.

"At this time, we'll not enforce the removal orders while they pursue other options," Gilhooly said Thursday.

The Servanos, parents of four US citizens and prominent members of their central Pennsylvania community, could be deported to their native Philippines because of a change in their marital status during their visa-application process more than 20 years ago.

They were single when they applied but married when the visas were granted; US officials were never told of the change.

Supporters of the family say the Servanos have been model immigrants since their arrival in the mid-1980s, and their story has led to an outpouring of support from around the country.

Pedro Servano, 54, is a family physician in Selinsgrove, an underserved area of central Pennsylvania about 100 miles northwest of Philadelphia; Salvacion, 51, runs an Asian grocery store and bakery. Two of their four children are college graduates, while two are still in secondary school.

On Thursday, Servano said the deferred action is "giving us hope."

"That's a positive move," he said. "We are just very thankful."

Pennsylvania's federal lawmakers continue to work on the case with the family and government officials, Cotler said Thursday. Special congressional legislation is the Servanos' last hope for being able to remain in the country, he said.

Cotler said the request for deferred action, which was granted Wednesday, is a recognition by immigration officials that there is "something extraordinary" about the Servanos' case.

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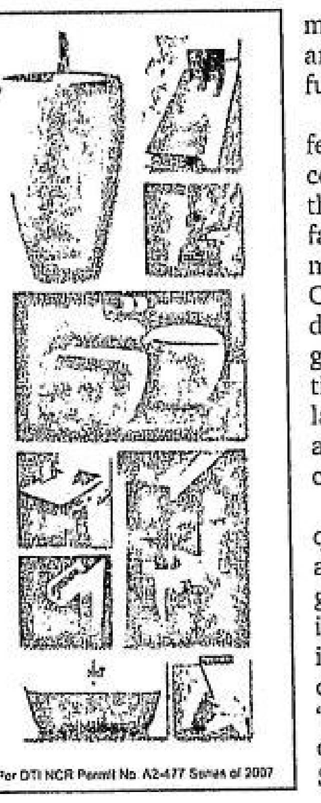

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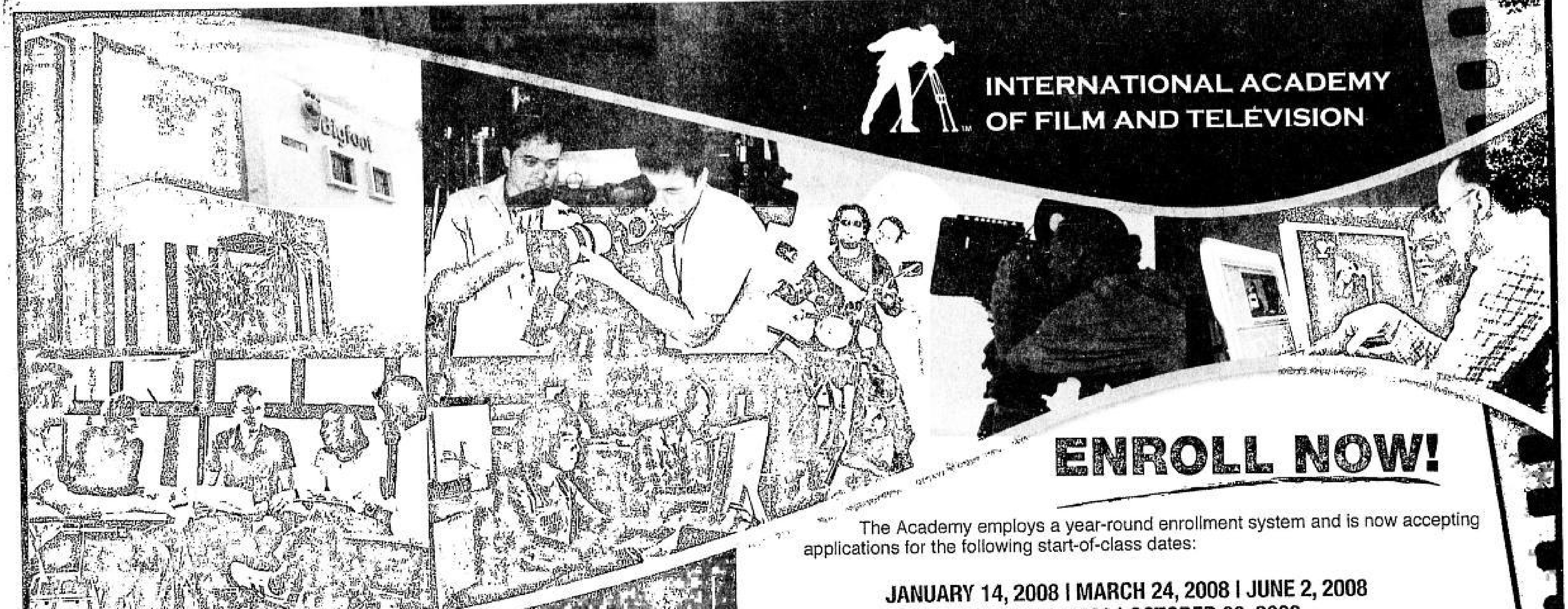

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Exciting Short Term Workshops for January 2008 at the IAFT!

Workshops are a year-round activity at the IAFT and a wide selection is offered throughout 2008. Most of the workshops will be conducted on-campus located at the Bigfoot I.T. and Media Park in Mactan, Cebu.

JANUARY WORKSHOPS	DATES
Teacher Development - Acting *Learn to convey the latest dramatic techniques to your students*	January 5, 12 and 19
Acting for TV and Film - Adults *Be a star under the klieg lights by understanding the difference of acting in front of a camera*	January 5, 12 and 19
Basic Photoshop *Create and enhance stunning images by learning Photoshop basics*	January 12 to 14
Acting for TV and Film - Kids *Get your kids to be comfortable in front of a cam and on the spotlight*	January 12, 19 and 26
Sinulog Series - Digital Video Editing *Celebrate the Sinulog Festival frame-by-frame through Digital Video Editing*	January 14 to 19
Sinulog Series - HD Cinematography *Bring out the color of the Sinulog Festival with a crash course in High Definition Cinematography*	January 18 to 19
Sinulog Series - Digital Photography *Capture the color of the Sinulog Festival with Digital Photography*	January 18 to 21
Acting from the Ground Up - Teens *Kick-start your acting career early by learning the basics*	January 18 to 20
Teacher Development Program - Stage Directing *Put together a sophisticated school production with a specialized course for teachers*	January 25 to 27
Stage Management and Production *Get hands-on training in managing your own stage production from plays to concerts and special events*	January 25 to 27
Sound Design *Enhance your film by knowing the Dos and Don'ts of audio*	January 26 to 28
Pilates *Breathe a refreshing workout to your fitness routine with a revolutionary exercise technique that's taking the world by storm*	All Mondays of January

Please visit our website for the entire First Quarter (January through March) workshop schedule.
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Contact us today for more information regarding the 2008 workshops and the other course offerings of the IAFT. Our customer service representatives would be glad to accommodate your call. Dial telephone number +63-32-493-8889 extension 5258/5259.

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Correction

IN THE DEC. 6 ISSUE, the caption of a front-page photograph showing Filipino tenors and sopranos inadvertently omitted the name of the tenor standing second from right. The tenor's name is George Yang, president of McDonald's Philippines. Our sincere apologies.

* * *

Readers may send their requests for correction of factual errors in writing to the Day Desk, Philippine Daily Inquirer, PDI Building, Chino Roces Avenue corner Mascardo Street, Makati City, fax Nos. 897-47-93/94; e-mail address: day-desk@inquirer.com.ph.

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Neri says Palace barred him from testifying

By Dona Pazzibugan

FORMER SOCIO-ECONOMIC Planning Secretary Romulo Neri has told the Senate he was prevented by Malacañang from attending further Senate hearings on the aborted $329 million National Broadband Network deal with China's ZTE Corp.

Neri pointed to Malacañang in his reply to the Senate's Nov. 20 order for him to explain why he should not be cited for contempt for snubbing the Senate hearings.

"He claimed he's being prevented by the executive (department)," said Sen. Alan Cayetano, chair of the Senate blue ribbon committee that leads the joint inquiry.

Cayetano did not give further details and declined to give a copy of Neri's reply. The blue ribbon committee is reportedly in the process of giving other committee members copies of Neri's letter along with other documents related to the NBN deal.

The Senate inquiry into the alleged bribery and overpricing in the $329 million loan deal with China has forced President Macapagal-Aroyo to cancel the deal altogether.

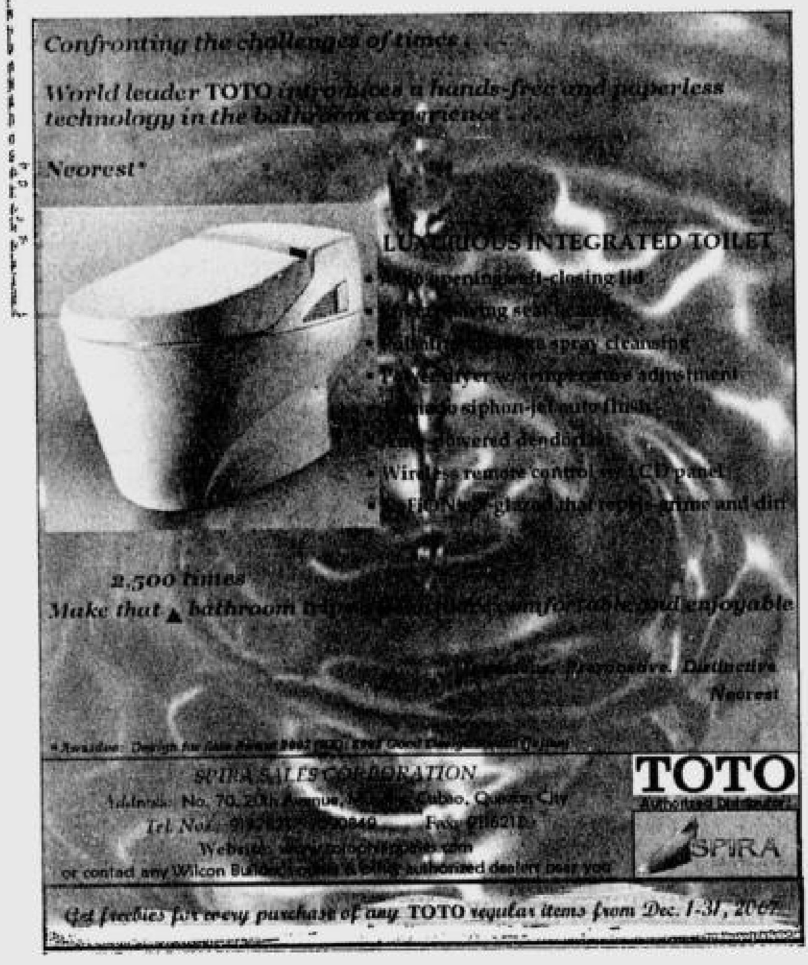
In his Senate testimony, Neri said former Commission on Elections Benjamin Abalos tried to bribe him P200 million to approve the project. He, however, invoked "executive privilege" when he was asked about his conversations with the President on the deal.

Before the ZTE deal scandal, he was reassigned as chair of the Commission on Higher Education.

Losing project proponent Jose "Joey" de Venecia III, son of Speaker Jose de Venecia Jr., also told the Senate Abalos tried to bribe him $10 million to back out of the project. He also implicated the President's husband, Jose Miguel Arroyo, Aboitiz Transport System CEO Endika Aboitiz and International Container and Terminal Services Inc. (ICTSI) chair Enrique Razon Jr. in the controversial deal.

Abalos resigned from his post even as he denied the bribery allegations.

At the last hearing on Nov. 20, the Senate ordered Neri to show cause why he should not be cited for contempt after he ignored a Senate subpoena to attend the hearing that day.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SPEAKER'S ASSURANCE

'Cheap medicine bill will pass'

By Norman Bordadora

SPEAKER JOSE DE VENECIA YESTERDAY said the House of Representatives will pass the cheaper medicines bill before Congress goes on Christmas recess on Dec. 22.

And if his prayer is answered, the bill will be approved by the bicameral conference committee before the break.

"The two chambers will have approved it before the break and we're praying for both sides to get past the bicam before Christmas," De Venecia said in an interview.

"Otherwise, it will be (passed on) the last week of January or early February," he added.

De Venecia belied reports that the House had succumbed to the intense lobby of multinational pharmaceutical firms to delay, water down or even archive the piece of legistlation meant to make medicines more affordable in the country.

"We agreed last night that we will give priority to the cheap medicines bill and that we will approve it Tuesday night or Wednesday afternoon next week," De Venecia said.

De Venecia said he had a meeting with representatives of the parties of the majority coalition in the House on Thursday night.

Iloilo Rep. Ferjenel Biron, vice chair of the House committee on health and a principal author of the bill, said on radio station dzBB that he received De Venecia's commitment that the bill would be passed on Wednesday next week.

"There's no truth to the insinuations that the bill will be killed that we will succumb to pharmaceuticals lobby that we cannot pass before we go on recess. That's black propaganda," De Venecia said.

"It can be presented before the bicam before the break. Definitely," he added.

Asked about the bill becoming a watered down version that may instead be used by pharmaceutical firms for their advantage, De Venecia said: "The important thing is that it will bring down prices of medicines for the great masses for patented and non-patented medicines."

"That's the bottom line," he added.

The cheap medicines bill was supposed to have been passed as early as toward the end of the 13th Congress but has been experiencing delays since the 14th Congress convened in August.

Biron has said that one congressman has been raising too many concerns on the floor and appears intent on blocking the passage of the measure.

Gov't defense lawyers lock horns on Pen video

By DJ Yap and Nikko Dizon

DEFENSE LAWYERS AND prosecutors locked horns yesterday over the admissibility as evidence of a digital video disc (DVD) containing television footage of the Peninsula Manila takeover in the first hearing of the rebellion case.

Senior State Prosecutor Emmanuel Velasco told Judge Elmo Alameda of the Makati Regional Trial Court Branch 150 that he intended to submit as evidence a copy of the DVD, which contained television station ANC's hour-by-hour coverage of the Nov. 29 standoff, when a group of junior officers, civilian personalities and lawyers led by Sen. Antonio Trillanes IV and Army Brig. Gen. Danilo Lim occupied the hotel for six hours.

But Theodore Te, counsel for Bishop Julio Labayen and former University of the Philippines president Francisco Nemenzo, said the piece of evidence should not be admitted as its existence was not divulged during the inquest.

"This diskette or DVD was not referred to, never shown to us, never indicated to us during the five-hour inquest. Going over the evidence, it was not even mentioned," Te said.

Velasco argued that the Department of Justice resolution finding basis to charge Trillanes and his group for rebellion had specifically cited the ANC footage as basis for some of the allegations.

Aside from Trillanes, also charged with rebellion were former Vice President Teofisto Guingona and 34 other military officers, Church officials and civilians linked to the takeover.

None of the detained accused attended the hearing since the defense lawyers who filed four separate motions only on Thursday had not been able to secure court orders for their clients' appearance.

Te said the DVD should not be admitted since the defense never had the chance to question its authenticity and would pose an "undue surprise" to the defense.

Ernesto Francisco Jr., a collaborating counsel for Guingona, noted that the DVD was not even included in the list of documentary evidence that was attached to the case information filed in court.

Alameda said he would rule on the admissibility of the DVD in 10 days.

Also yesterday, the Philippine National Police said it was initiating another round of meeting with media representatives in the hope of forging an agreement regarding guidelines on covering crisis situations like the hotel siege to avoid endangering lives and the obstruction of justice.

At the same time, PNP spokesperson Chief Supt. Samuel Pagdilao said, investigators could ask reporters who covered the standoff to be witnesses against the group of rebels.

E. Visayas jolted by mild quake

By TJ Burgonio

MILD TO STRONGLY moderate earthquakes yesterday struck eastern Visayas, Cebu and a part of Metro Manila, but did not cause damage to life and property, the country's volcanologists said.

A 5.4 magnitude earthquake occurred offshore 93 km off Borongan, Eastern Samar at around 5:43 a.m. It originated from a fault, according to the Philippine Institute of Volcanology and Seismology (Phivolcs).

Intensity 4 was felt in Borongan and Catubig in Northern Samar, while Intensity 3 was recorded in Palo and Tacloban, Leyte.

"We haven't received any report of damage," Phivolcs director Renato Solidum said in a phone interview. He said the quake did not trigger a tsunami. "It was too moderate to trigger a tsunami."

For it to trigger a tsunami, an offshore earthquake should have a magnitude of close to 7, and a depth of less than 30 km, he said.

Hours earlier, a 3.5 magnitude earthquake occurred in the Sierra Madre mountain range in Aurora. Intensity 2 was felt in Quezon City, according to Phivolcs.

"This was only mild," Solidum said.

A 2.9 magnitude earthquake occurred offshore 4 km northeast of Madredejos, Bantayan island in Cebu at around 10:47 a.m. Intensity 2 was felt in Bantayan island.

"These are normal earthquakes that occur in the area because of the presence of faults," Solidum said.

An active fault, called the Philippine fault zone, runs from Luzon to Mindanao.

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Party-list solon slams GMA travel expenses

By Norman Bordadora

BAYAN MUNA REP. TEODORO Casino yesterday criticized President Macapagal-Arroyo for spending hundreds of millions of pesos in taxpayers' money as shown in a news research report that said nearly a fifth of the Office of the President's expenditures—some P482 million—were used on travel expenses in 2006.

The report posted on gmanews.tv by GMA research was culled from the Commission on Audit's report on the OP.

"The Commission on Audit has some 'pieces of evidence' to show that the Office of the President is an extravagant spender on multiple travels of the President and we can easily surmise that the Palace indeed spent for the House junket contingent to Europe," Casino said in a statement.

The militant party-list lawmaker made the statement in the wake of the continued European tour of Ms Arroyo. The House of Representatives has also been under fire because of the participation in the trip of more than 30 lawmakers.

Casino cited the report as saying that nearly a fifth or 20 percent of Office of the President's expenditures were on "traveling expenses" in 2006 totaling P482 million—more than double the P210 million spent for the same expenditure item in 2005.

"President Arroyo visited 13 countries—including Finland, Belgium, the United Kingdom, Cuba and the United States—in 2006. For that year, the OP spent P398 million on foreign travels alone, its second-biggest single expenditure," Casino said.

"In each of those trips, she had only a handful of legislators in tow," he added.

Casino said Ms Arroyo is a frequent traveler and is known to give travel perks to her "select favorites in Congress."

"A check on the current House junket contingent in Europe shows that aside from the two known millionaire congresspersons, the 30 other House Members would certainly not spend their own money for the high-end trip," Casino said.

"Another possible source of evidence would be the statement of assets and liabilities of these legislators that will prove that they cannot possible foot the bill," he added.

Groups slam GMA human rights award

OUTRAGED HUMAN RIGHTS GROUPS are planning to write Spain's Alcala de Henares University to recall the Medalla de Oro it handed to President Macapagal-Arroyo during her state visit there.

The Philippine Alliance of Human Rights Advocates (Pahra) and allied groups said the award constituted a "mockery" of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, and "added insult to an injured nation."

The university awarded the medal to Ms Arroyo on Tuesday for championing human rights. University Rector Virgilio Zapatero praised her for abolishing the capital punishment and seeking help to put an end to the killings.

"We are thinking of drafting a letter to the university so that we'd be able to present the real score of human rights in the Philippines and for them to be educated that human rights is not just the death penalty law," Pahra secretary general Renato Mabunga said in an interview.

"The award should be recalled. That's one thing we will demand from the university," added lawyer Virgie Suarez-Pinlac, spokesperson of the Kilusan para sa Pambansang Demokrasya (Movement for National Democracy).

The university obviously wasn't aware of the human rights situation, and ought to be informed of the report by UN rapporteur Philip Alston, he said.

"That alone would give them the knowledge of the human rights situation here," he said. "That alone would give them second thoughts about giving an award like that."

TJ Burgonio

Ampatuans play Santa

By Tarra Quismundo

AIRPORT EMPLOYEES GOT A CHRISTMAS bonus of sorts yesterday when Maguindanao Gov. Datu Andal Ampatuan Sr. and son Datu Zaldy Uy Ampatuan, governor of the Autonomous Region in Muslim Mindanao, decided to play Santa Claus and give workers gifts of P1,000 each.

Ninoy Aquino International Airport workers made a dash to a queue when the Ampatuans, who were waiting for a flight at the VIP room of the departure area, started handing out cash at around 4 p.m.

The line extended from the special room near the immigration check counters, past the Duty-Free Shop, to the pre-boarding waiting area. By their own estimates, airport workers said some 300 of them received the unexpected bonus.

"The line was so long because they (airport workers) heard that somebody was giving cash. But I did not go because I cannot leave my post. I have to guard our products," said Arnold Esguerra, a security guard posted at the Duty-Free Shop.

The elder Ampatuan had come to the airport with his staff to send off his son, Datu Zaldy and other relatives who were to fly to Saudi Arabia on a Saudia Airlines flight. The group was bound for Mecca for the Hajj, a religious pilgrimage for Muslims.

Witnesses said members of the officials' staff handed out cash to the employees in P1,000- and P500-bills," he said.

Tribute to NIC

THE REMAINS OF UNIVERSITY of the Philippines professor Monico "Nic" Atienza will lie until today at the chapel of the United Church of Christ in the Philippines building on 879 Edsa near the corner of Times Street in Quezon City.

A program of final tributes will start at 10 a.m. today. Cremation is scheduled at 3 p.m. at the Chinese Cemetery in La Loma, Quezon City.

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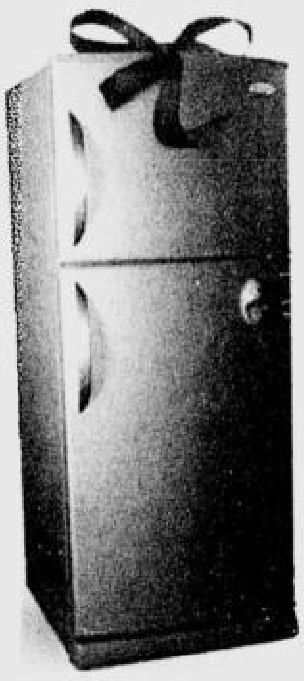

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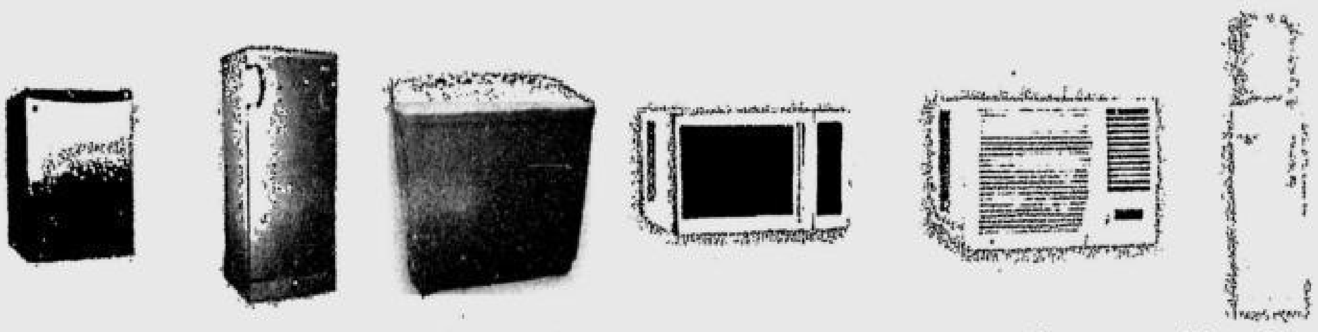

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Luminous Cross rising in small Quezon town

From page A1

handful of volunteers who believe they were called on this mission by God.

Waiting for another miracle

Devotees who visit the sanctuary go up 14 flights of stairs equivalent to the 14 stations of the cross. On each landing is an artwork done in mixed media (fiberglass, wood, metal, glass) depicting a station of the cross. So far, stations one to seven have been finished. Stations eight to 14 await funding or perhaps, another miracle.

The prayer tower has a dome where sits a cross which is 7 meters high and 5 meters wide. It is the world's first luminous cross mounted with five images of Marian apparitions.

The elements on the luminous cross and the building of the sanctuary are collective inputs from the dreams and inspirations received by various Catholic devotees and priests, mostly Filipinos, including an Indian national.

For the past three years, P20 million has come in the form of donations, from the sale of rosaries, rosary bracelets, Marian portraits, Christmas decors, religious icons and medals. Text brigades, mailed solicitations, Internet-based promotions, even overseas visits have been employed by volunteers to continue work on the prayer tower.

Built with faith and love

"[Because] we started with nothing, probably only with ardent prayers, we see the sanctuary's construction as a miracle. Volunteers would be able to raise money, at least to pay the laborers, until money for fresh supplies and materials would come. Our Lord really provided," says Dr. Paz Carandang, one of the Servants of the Luminous Cross of Grace, the name the volunteers gave themselves for the task of building the sanctuary.

"The building of the Luminous Cross of Grace sanctuary is a dream come true. We were guided by the inspiration that God is on top of the project. It is a work made possible only through faith and the community spirit of love," she says.

Carandang adds: "Now we are witness to signs that the sanctuary may indeed have a role in the conversion of souls, as Fr. Raul "Puti" Enriquez declared before us years ago at the start of the project. Among ourselves, we have noted many changes taking place in the way we see our day-to-day lives, the way we tackle our personal problems and the way we have opened ourselves to be of help to others."

God's will

Carandang, a cardiologist with the Makati Medical Center, hails from Sariaya, Quezon. Three year ago, she was among those who responded to the call of Enriquez, parish priest of the St. Isidore Parish, to help build the prayer tower.

To many Servants of the Luminous Cross of Grace, the sanctuary now stands as a reminder of what faith can achieve and how the Lord's promises come to be realized in the hands and thoughts of people who leave everything to God's will.

It has become a symbol of the work ahead which is to reach out to souls who seek to return to the ways of the Lord. As a powerhouse of prayer, it echoes the call, many times delivered by the Blessed Mother in her apparitions, for conversion and spiritual renewal.

Seeking meaning to visions

Enriquez, who is known for his passionate advocacies within the Church, is a spokesperson for Gomburza, a cause-orientated organization of priests, nuns, brothers and laity committed to the struggle for justice.

He believes the mission for the building of a tower started when he perceived a call from God to obtain an image of Santissimo Cristo de Burgos from Spain in 1998.

Setting forth on a pilgrimage abundant with faith but with little money, Enriquez succeeded in bringing back a Santissimo Cristo de Burgos image which bears the 5,000 wounds Christ suffered in the Passion to complete the salvation of man. The image is a powerful symbol of God's immense love for mankind.

In August 2004, earnest efforts to build the sanctuary beside the St. Isidore Church finally started after a group of devotees, all of whom were not from Quezon Province, sought a meeting with Enriquez.

Pilgrimage tourism

One of them was Cynthia C. Lazo, a Department of Tourism director who has made pilgrimage tourism a personal mission. While in prayer, Lazo says she had a vision of gathering people on a trip to Agdangan to see Enriquez.

In their meeting with Enriquez, Lazo and her group shared with him their separate visions which turned out to have common elements—a place of prayer, a luminous cross, fishermen, and the image of the risen Christ.

In turn, the priest told them that he, himself, had recurring dreams of building a towering place of prayer.

The Sanctuary design

Construction started in November 2004 using design specifications from Enriquez who wanted the sanctuary to rise 120 feet (37 meters) from the ground to symbolize the 12 tribes of Israel.

The monstrance design was provided by Aia Santos Halili, an artist from San Mateo, Rizal. According to Halili, the design came from a dream she had after accepting the assignment.

Halili initially thought her involvement with the Quezon project would end with the submission of her design to Enriquez.

However, she remained active with the construction, as did the other Servants, who started to discover their spiritual gifts, like healing and the ability to read mystical signs.

In March 2005, Halili was requested by an Indian devotee to render another version of a painting of the Luminous Cross of Grace with five images of Marian apparitions. The Indian devotee claimed that the Blessed Mother had prompted her to have the image done as a painting.

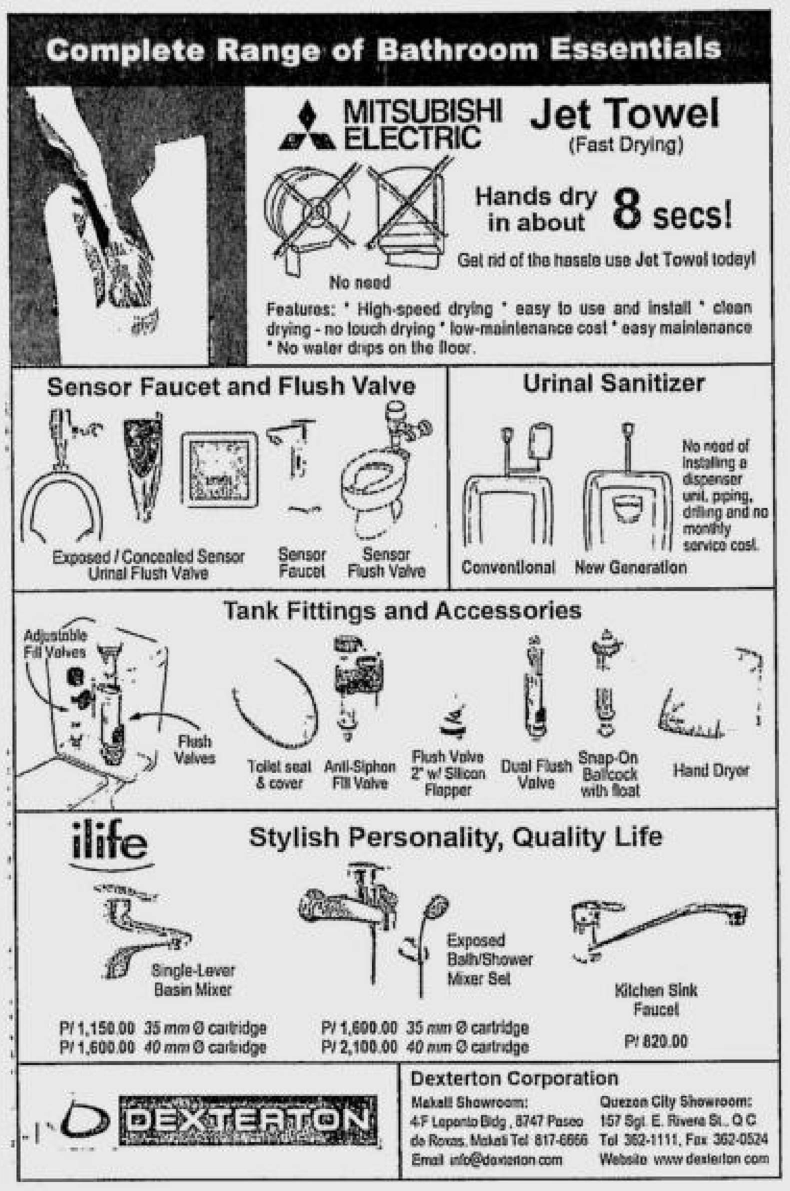
Gifts of the Holy Spirit

Halili became more active with the project as her gift for healing developed, as did the other Servants, including Halili's sister Nona Aquino.

Raising funds and seeking spiritual graces by way of Holy Mass and confession, the Servants of the Luminous Cross of Grace meet at 7 p.m. every Tuesday at the Janssen Hall at the Christ the King compound on E. Rodriguez Ave. in Quezon City.

In the last three years, people have visited Agdangan to see the prayer tower, and attend Holy Mass on special liturgical feasts at the St. Isidore Church.

They have been also asked to render moments of adoration before the Blessed Sacrament. Many have recounted experiences of coming out refreshed and energized by the Holy Spirit.



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General Lim: I was forced to join Trillanes walkout

From page A1

of Sen. Antonio Trillanes IV in the hotel standoff, is currently detained with Trillanes and the rest of the Magdalo soldiers at the Camp Crame custodial center. State prosecutors had earlier said they would seek the group's transfer to the New Bilibid Prisons in Muntinlupa City.

In an urgent motion filed before Judge Elmo Alameda of Makati Regional Trial Court Branch 150, Lim said through his lawyer Vicente Verdadero that he was "not a Magdalo officer facing a coup d'etat charge and did not walk out from the sala of Judge [Oscar] Pimentel."

He attached a copy of Pimentel's order dated Nov. 29, which charged 14 of the accused with direct contempt for walking out of the proceedings.

'Incredulous'

That order said Lim, a witness in the coup d'etat trial and not one of the accused, was "forcibly dragged out of the courtroom" by Lt. James Layug before they marched with Trillanes and company out of the Makati City Hall on J.P. Rizal Street and onward to the Peninsula at the intersection of Ayala and Makati Avenues.

But according to Executive Secretary Eduardo Ermita, what Lim did on Nov. 29 was "his call."

Ermita found incredulous Lim's statement that he had only been forced to join Trillanes and company in the walkout from the courtroom and eventual failed revolt at the Peninsula.

Higher rank

Ermita pointed out that Lim was a brigadier general, and thus ranked higher than Trillanes, a Navy lieutenant (senior grade) before becoming a senator.

"*Kung ayaw niyang sumama, sana siya ay naupo doon at di siya sumama* (If he did not want to go with them, he should just have stayed put and not joined them)," Ermita said.

Ermita, himself a retired general, made the remarks to reporters at the Palace in reply to a question on whether he thought Lim's statements showed that he was distancing himself from Trillanes.

Lim is facing charges of violations of Articles of War before the Armed Forces' special general court-martial over an alleged coup attempt in February 2006.

The court-martial conducts its trial at Camp Capinpin in Tanay every Friday of the month.

Lim said the military, through Col. Pedro Herrera-Davila, staff judge advocate of AFP Chief of Staff Gen. Hermogenes Esperon, had given its consent for the transfer to the state penitentiary in Muntinlupa of "only the Magdalo soldiers charged with coup d'etat [who] walked out" of Pimentel's courtroom.

The AFP has begun an informal inquiry into whether Lim and 11 Magdalo rebel officers should be tried before a military tribunal for calling for the ouster of President Macapagal-Arroyo at the Peninsula.

Another court-martial?

Should the military bring Lim and the Magdalo officers to trial, it would be another court-martial for all of them for allegedly leading attempts to overthrow the government in February 2006 and July 2003, respectively.

"You can call it a case buildup. But there are procedures [followed in the military]... We can say that we are in the preparatory stage, gathering materials that would be reviewed," Lt. Col. Bartolome Bacarro told reporters.

Bacarro, the AFP spokesperson, said military lawyers had taken some videos of the siege at the Peninsula.

"This is, I think, the initial stages of the conduct of the investigation," he said.

He added that an official investigation would begin once the pretrial investigation officer had been designated.

Roll call

The 11 Magdalo officers still considered on active duty who walked out of their coup d'etat hearing in Judge Pimentel's courtroom and joined Trillanes and Lim at the Peninsula had been identified by police as Lieutenants Billy Pascua, Andy Torrato, Eugene Gonzales and Jonnel Sanggalang; Captains Gary Alejano and Segundino Orfiano Jr.; Lieutenants (senior grade) James Layug and Manuel Cabochan; Lt. (junior grade) Arturo Pascua Jr.; Ensign Armano Pontejos; and Capt. Nicanor Faeldon.

Bacarro said the "best option" for Faeldon and the two other Magdalo soldiers at large—former Sergeants Elmer Colon and Sonny Madarang—was to voluntarily surrender to authorities.

"I think our message to them would be they cannot hide forever. Eventually, the time will come when the long arm of the law will catch them," he said.

Captured Magdalo

Bacarro also said Marine Pfc. Arvin Celestino had been returned to the AFP for temporary custody pending the resolution of the Department of Justice on the complaint filed by the Philippine National Police against the Magdalo soldier.

"I am not at liberty to say where he is, but definitely he is under the custody of the [AFP]," Bacarro said.

Police said Celestino had admitted to being present at the Peninsula standoff on Nov. 29.

Celestino was arrested at the Ninoy Aquino International Airport last Dec. 5, as he was about to leave for the United States to work as a lifeguard. *With a report from Christine O. Avendaño*

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Gov't loses case vs Tan; SC voids sequestration

From page A1

asking the high court to reverse a 2006 Sandiganbayan decision ordering the government to lift the sequestration on the shares of stock in four companies owned by Tan—Allied Banking Corp., Foremost Farms, Fortune Tobacco Corp. and Shareholdings Inc.

The shares were sequestered in 1986 following the people power revolution that brought down the Marcos dictatorship. *(See "What Went Before," Page A8.)*

The case involves a 20-year-old suit, Civil Case No. 005, that the PCGG filed against Tan and the Marcoses, claiming that Tan's assets were part of the dictator's ill-gotten assets.

The government's case against Tan is based mainly on a cross-claim on the Tan companies by Imelda Marcos, the dictator's widow, who declared to the Sandiganbayan that her husband was the beneficial owner of most of the Tan companies.

In her court filing, Imelda revealed the details of an elaborate 60-40 wealth sharing scheme between Marcos and Tan. She said that 60 percent of the Tan holding company, Shareholdings Inc., was really owned by the Marcoses.

Tan, the country's third richest individual with a fortune of $2.3 billion according to Forbes magazine, has repeatedly denied he was a crony of Marcos and that he acquired control of several firms at preferential prices.

The government is also still trying to recover P25.4 billion in allegedly unpaid taxes from him.

Not setback

The PCGG yesterday was undeterred by the Supreme Court decision, insisting that it was "not a setback" for the agency.

Jay Miguel, the PCGG's head of legal services, said the purpose of the sequestration, which was to prevent Tan from dissipating the assets of the companies suspected to be part of the ill-gotten wealth of Marcos, was still being achieved.

"There is still an ongoing case with the Sandiganbayan. The defendant couldn't dispose of anything anyway because these assets are deemed to be *in custodia legis* [in the custody or keeping of the law]," he said.

LUCIO TAN: The rich get richer. The low profile tycoon, who goes around Metro Manila by helicopter, is listed by Forbes as the country's third richest person. LYN RILLON

Miguel said the Supreme Court decision dealt only with the administrative aspect of the case.

"It didn't fully say whether the properties are ill-gotten [or not]. We're still in the process of presenting evidence, witnesses and documents with the Sandiganbayan," he said.

"This isn't over yet," he said in a telephone interview.

21 years ago

The 73-year-old Tan, who was born in China's Fujian province and moved to the Philippines as a child, keeps a low profile, shunning interviews and preferring to traverse Manila by helicopter.

"It can only be a positive thing for all of us in the group," Cecilia Pesayco, group secretary for the Tan-owned Philippine National Bank, said of the Supreme Court ruling.

"It's 21 years already and it has really limited the bank and the group from expanding," Pesayco said.

In its Dec. 7 ruling, the Supreme Court said it was necessary that the sequestration orders be backed by "prima facie factual foundation," meaning it is accepted as correct until proven otherwise so that the parties claiming to own the assets can contest the sequestration's validity, including going to the courts.

It said this opportunity to contest would be meaningless unless there is a record which the reviewing authority can use as a basis for determining whether the sequestered property was ill-gotten or whether the PCGG had acted illegally.

No reason for TRO

It said such records, which should have included the reason the government wanted to seize the shares of stock and the record of proceedings that were the basis for the sequestration orders, were not present.

The high court also found no reason to grant the PCGG's plea for a temporary restraining order on the antigraft court's 2006 ruling.

It also rejected the PCGG's argument that the Sandiganbayan encroached on its jurisdiction, and that the antigraft court substituted its judgment for that of the PCGG.

It said that when sequestration orders are nullified for lack of showing that the assets are ill-gotten, the courts are not replacing the PCGG's judgment with their own but are just applying the law.

Marcos Jr. as witness

The assets being contested are a combined 60 percent of nine Tan companies—Fortune, Asia Brewery, Allied Banking, Foremost Farms, Himel Industries, Granspan Development Corp., Silangan Holdings, Dominium Realty and Construction Corp. and Shareholdings Inc.—which the PCGG wants forfeited in favor of the state.

Earlier this year, the Sandiganbayan summoned the dictator's son, Ilocos Norte Rep. Ferdinand Marcos Jr., to identify the deeds of assignment and corporate records to prove the beneficial interest of the Marcos family in the assets of Tan. *With a report from Daxim Lucas*

What Went Before

ON VARIOUS DATES IN 1986 and in January 1987, the newly formed Presidential Commission on Good Government, which is tasked to recover ill-gotten wealth accumulated by ousted dictator Ferdinand Marcos and his associates, ordered the sequestration of shares of stock owned by Lucio Tan and other persons in different corporations.

The corporations involved were Maranao Hotels & Resort Corp., Allied Banking Corp., Foremost Farms Inc., Shareholdings Inc. and Fortune Tobacco Corp.

After the issuance of the first sequestration orders, Tan and the other shareholders, namely: Mariano Tanenglian, Carmen Khao Tan, Florencio Santos Sr., Natividad Santos and Florencio Santos Jr., filed petitions requesting the PCGG, then headed by Jovito Salonga, to lift the orders.

When the PCGG did not act on the motions, Tan and company asked the Supreme Court in August and September 1986 to nullify the orders for sequestration. The high court referred the petitions to the Sandiganbayan in February 1990.

In August 1993, Tan and the other shareholders filed with the Sandiganbayan a supplemental petition that invoked Section 26, Article 18 of the 1987 Constitution, which provides that a sequestration order shall be issued only upon showing of a prima facie case.

No prima facie evidence

In the same month, the Sandiganbayan nullified the orders of sequestration of shares in Maranao Hotels & Resort Corp. PCGG appealed the decision before the Supreme Court, but the high court affirmed the judgment in 1996.

In 2006, the Sandiganbayan ruled that the remaining writs of sequestration issued by the PCGG against Tan and company were void. The Sandiganbayan explained that before the PCGG issued the writs, it had failed to establish prima facie evidence that the properties were ill gotten.

The PCGG then filed a petition assailing the Sandiganbayan decision before the Supreme Court. *Cyril L. Bonabente, Inquirer Research*

A jab at Trillanes was dying …

From page A1

bring home the point.

"*Aakdain ko ang isang karanasang wala akong kaalam-alam, at marahil para ay hindi ko dapat pakialaman. Pero may ganoon ba? Ang tao ay tao. Lahat ng may kaugnayan sa tao, ay may kaugnayan sa akin* (I will write on an experience I know nothing about. Perhaps I shouldn't interfere. But is this possible? We are, after all, people. Everything that affects people affects me)," Villanueva wrote in his blog, renevillanueva.blogspot.com, the day after the ruckus at the Pen.

"*Kaya sa kabila ng kung ilang araw na pagkakasangkutsa ko sa gamot, pawis, ubo ang paninikip ng hinga, sinikap kong bumangon para mag-*blog. *Nasabay pa ang hinagpis ng lamas sa adbenturismo ni Senador* Trillanes *at garapal na pang-nagaw nila ng kapangyarihan. Gumimik na rin ng ganito ang bagitong* poster boy *ng Oposisyon sa* Oakwood. (*Bakit mahilig siya sa* luxury hotel?) *Siyempre, kinasuhan siya ng Gobyerno* (Although I am very ill, I forced myself to get up and blog on Senator Trillanes' selfish attempt to grab power. The poster boy of the opposition has done this before at Oakwood. Why does he like luxury hotels? Of course, he has been charged by the government)," he stressed.

Advice to other adventurists

He concluded his last written piece with an advice to those who would want to follow Trillanes' path: "*Iisa ang gusto nating lahat. Ang alam ko, demokrasya, Paano matatamo? Kailangan ang* rule of law. *Dapat nating itaguyod ang batas sa lahat ng pagkakataon. Walang* short cut *dito. Hindi pwedeng mainip o mapikon dahil mabagal ang proseso* (We all want the same thing. To my knowledge it's democracy. How do we attain this? Through the rule of law. We must respect the law at all times. We should not be impatient or be annoyed because the process is slow)."

BATIBOT HEAD WRITER, Rene Villanueva, was elevated to the Palanca Awards Hall of Fame.

Villanueva succumbed to a massive stroke on Dec. 5 at the Philippine Heart Center. He had suffered from past strokes and other illnesses including pneumonia and kidney failure due to complications from diabetes. He was 53.

His fiery tirade against Trillanes shows his utmost affection for the country and its people.

Close to the people

Villanueva's friend and colleague Marne Kilates wrote in his blog: "Rene was one whose discipline and persuasion in writing was to stay close to the people and the place he knew and loved (mainly the La Loma district in Quezon City), and to derive his writing from there, as well as dedicate his talent and knowledge to them."

"Up to the end, despite the sophistication and breadth of the imagination he had developed—in his teaching, mentoring in workshops, and his travels—he always wrote for and about them," he added.

Villanueva was the award-winning playwright and author everyone looked up to. When he was only 29, he earned the distinction of winning the most number of Palanca Awards. Among his prize winners include "Kumbersasyon," "May Isang Sundalo," "Huling Gabi sa Maragondon," "Punla ng Dekada," "Ang Hepe," "Asawa" and "Awit ng Adarna."

He authored several children's books, including the popular "Aklat Adarna" series, "Si Emang Engkantada at ang Tatlong Haragan," "Barumbadong Bus," "Umuulan," "Ang Pamilya Ng Ismid," "Nagsasabi Si Patpat," "Si Elephas at Estrogon" and "Si Paula Oink Oink." He also produced the compilation "Sa Dako Roon," featuring Filipino translations of famous Brothers Grimm stories.

Batibot

His most prominent work was as head writer for the defunct children's program "Batibot," the Filipino Sesame Street, that earned him several international awards, including the Prix Juenesse in Germany and the New York Film and TV Festivals. In addition, Villanueva was bestowed the Gawad CCP Para Sa Sining for Literature in 2004 and the Gawad Chanselor sa UP as the "Pinakamahusay na Alagad ng Sining."

Villanueva also etched his name in Philippine cinema for his screenplays of "Pasan Ko ang Daigdig" and "Gabi Na, Kumander."

At the time of his death, Villanueva was an assistant professor of the Department of Filipino and Philippine Literature at University of the Philippines in Diliman, Quezon City.

Villanueva's wake is at the FTR Chapel of the Sanctuarium along Araneta Avenue in Quezon City. His remains will be brought today to the Hardin ng mga Diwata in UP Diliman. Cremation rites will be announced later.

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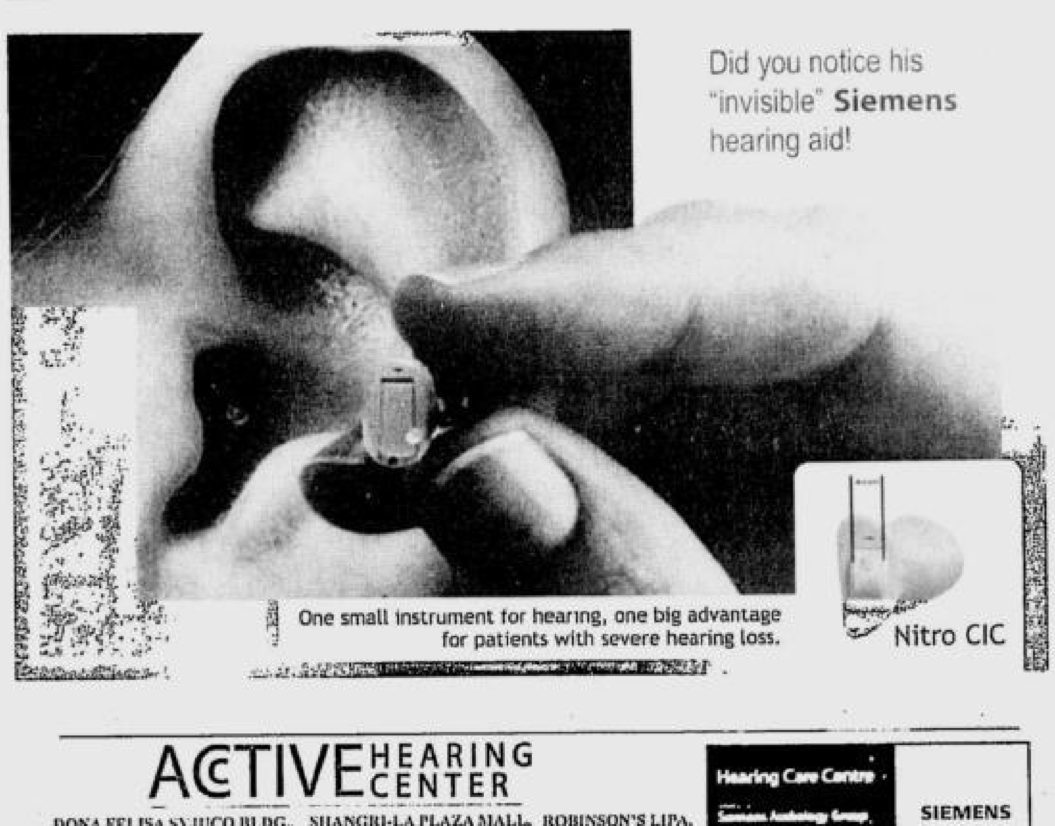

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Rape victim 'very upset' over Jalosjos' release plan

From page A1

demned former Rep. Romeo Jalosjos to two life terms in prison for rape.

The girl's anger was roused by reports quoting a prison chaplain as saying that Jalosjos could be eligible for release as early as Dec. 16 in the wake of President Macapagal-Arroyo's decision in April to commute his life sentence to 16 years.

News that Jalosjos may soon walk free had also outraged Bishop Pedro Arigo, head of the Episcopal Commission on Prison Pastoral Care (ECPPC) of the Catholic Bishops Conference of the Philippines.

Arigo said the government's grant of pardon to prisoners was now becoming "very political."

Legarda, in a telephone interview, conceded there was nothing she could do legally to prevent Jalosjos' release after Ms Arroyo commuted his sentence.

Legarda said she did not know where the girl was now, adding: "I guess she's working."

A matter of outrage

She described the commutation of Jalosjos' sentence as an "act of grace" but one that should be a cause of anger for other prisoners who had not received presidential mercy.

"That's really the problem, that's why it should be a matter of outrage for people without the power of prisoners like Jalosjos. They'd be there forever," Legarda said.

She said it seemed such clemency was only for the rich and famous.

But she acknowledged it was the President's prerogative to grant executive clemency to convicts.

When to give up

"I wish there was something we can do. There's nothing we can do when the President acts," Legarda said.

"You know, there's something we Filipinos must learn and that is to realize when to give up. Like Trillanes. You can't keep beating your head against the wall. Unless the people rise up, the President is not going to be moved. Why would she be moved to overturn her own commutation?" she said.

Sen. Antonio Trillanes IV is facing a new charge of rebellion for his short-lived takeover of the Peninsula Manila hotel on Nov. 29.

Small consolation

It was a small consolation to Legarda that Jalosjos was not pardoned and that his civil rights have not been restored, meaning he could not vote and could not hold public office. He has also lost parental authority over his children and still has to pay the rape victim damages.

"I was expecting him to be pardoned. At least now, he's still a convict. For us and the public, he's still a rapist," she said.

She said the commutation had not taken away Jalosjos' rape conviction.

Major church donor

One thing to be done after his release is to watch if he would try to seek public office or be appointed to a government body.

"If he tries to run, we can file a complaint with the Comelec (Commission on Elections)," she said.

As for the statement of the prison chaplain, Msgr. Roberto Olaguer, that Jalosjos had shown remorse, Legarda pointed out that a priest testified in Jalosjos' behalf during the rape trial and that the former lawmaker is one of the biggest donors to the Catholic Church.

Only deserving ones

Bishop Arigo said that while the Church encourages pardon for offenders, this should be applied only to deserving inmates.

"We don't want to see them (inmates) inside the prison forever but such a privilege should be applied to all and the facet of restorative justice must not be set aside," said Arigo.

He said there were many other old inmates suffering inside the country's prison system, and that most of them could hardly walk and only spent their days in wheelchairs.

Arigo questioned why the government had failed to show clemency to other prisoners who might be more deserving of a pardon or a commutation of their sentences.

Review other cases

He urged the government to review the cases of other eligible inmates.

Jalosjos was among a list of people who had received presidential clemency this year.

Last October, Ms Arroyo pardoned former President Joseph Estrada after he was convicted of plunder by the antigraft court.

More deserving than Erap

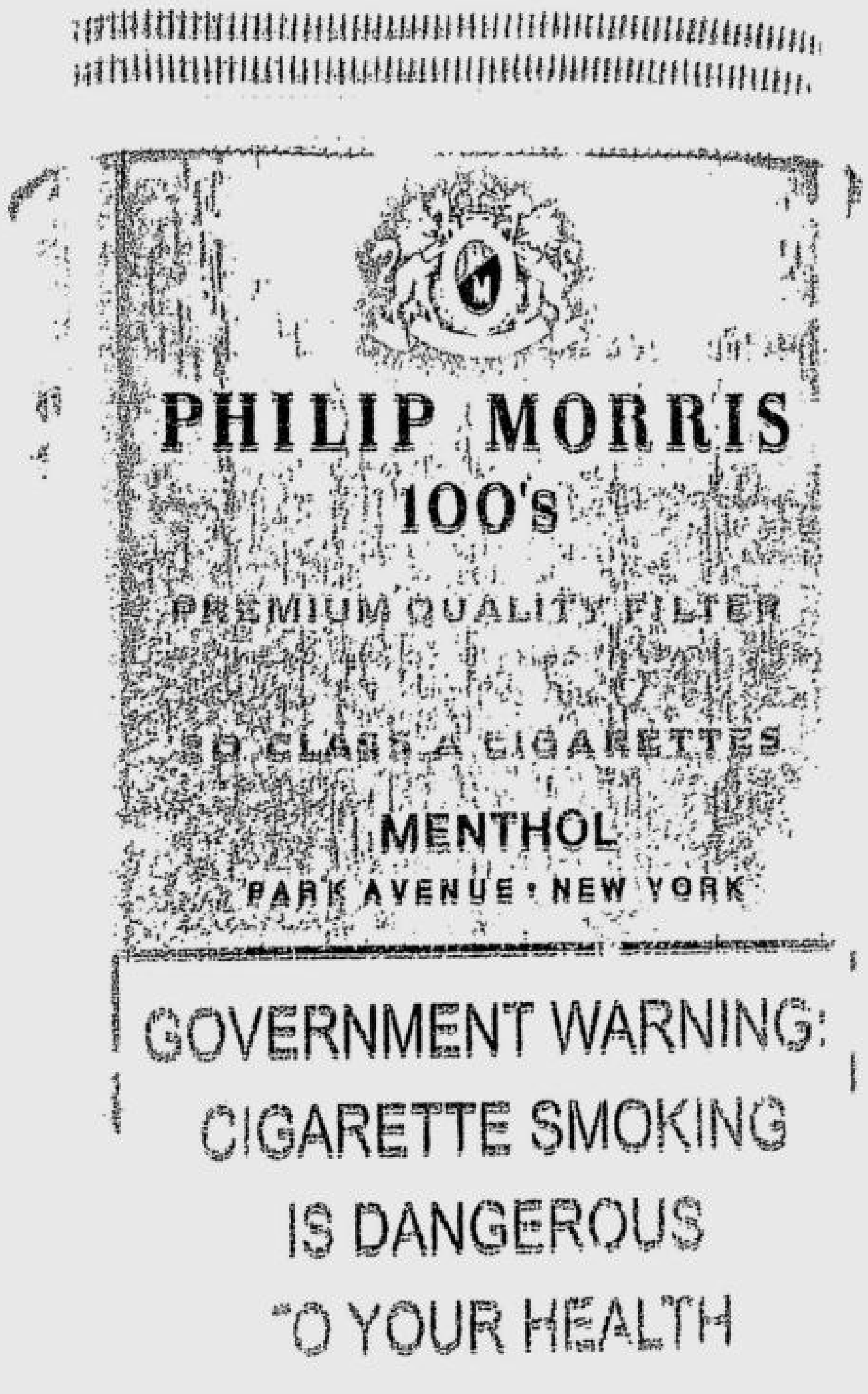
Weeks later, she pardoned Pablo Martinez, one of the soldiers convicted of the 1983 murder of opposition leader Benigno "Ninoy" Aquino.

"Like Estrada and Martinez, the government should be fair and consistent in granting pardon," said Arigo, pointing out that Estrada and Martinez were pardoned on humanitarian grounds since both had turned 70.

The ECPPC has said there are at least 122 convicts who have turned 70 but are still languishing behind bars.

ECPPC executive secretary Rodolfo Diamante said earlier that these other inmates were more eligible for pardon and had suffered more in prison compared to Estrada and Martinez.

Diamante said the grant of parole and pardon should not be based on age only but on the inmates' readiness to rejoin society.



Government Warnin
is dangerous

KEEPING IN TOUCH: President Arroyo listens from Seville, Spain, to the report of PNP Director General Avelino Razon during the videoconference of the National Security Cabinet Cluster meeting. Also in photo are DILG Secretary Ronaldo Puno (2nd from left) and PMS chief Secretary Cerge Remonde. LYN RILLON

THE DISTINGUISHED Tony Blair, the UK's former prime minister, comes calling on President Arroyo at the presidential suite of the Dorchester Hotel in London. MALACAÑANG PHOTO

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Court junks Atong trip to Cambodia

By Jocelyn R. Uy

SORRY, NO CAMBODIA TRIP FOR CHARLIE "Atong" Ang.

The Sandiganbayan Special Division has junked Ang's motion for reconsideration in which he asked the court for a weeklong travel pass to Cambodia, where a three-month-old lottery consultancy job is awaiting him.

Ang, a consultant of the Philippine Amusement and Gaming Corp. in the Estrada administration, received a job offer last August from 888 Corporation, a company that operates a lottery in Cambodia.

The company cited his expertise in the numbers game and contended that he could help the business earn more.

Two months ago, the Special Division turned down Ang's request to travel abroad, pointing out that he, a probationer, might abandon the jurisdiction of the court.

Ang appeared before the court and explained why he needed to go abroad.

He said there was a need for him to inspect the site and observe how the company was running its lottery game so he could come up with a design to perk up the business.

"The company has been running the lottery game for six months now and it is going bankrupt," Ang had told the justices.

But in a resolution issued late Thursday, the antigraft court ruled that Ang could still do his job as a consultant by using teleconference facilities and the Internet.

"In this modern age of information technology, actual presence is dispensed with by the use of teleconference facilities and Internet access. The purpose of meeting with the officers of the [company] can be achieved by teleconference," the court said.

Ang was placed under a two-year probation in May, two months after the court convicted him of indirect bribery.

Taking note of Ang's "history," the court ruled that he was still a flight risk.

GMA to Kuwait . . .

From page A1

sibility of the emir extending clemency to Ranario if Ms Arroyo interceded for her.

Only Ms Arroyo (and possibly Bunye) would seem to have an inkling of what lay ahead for Ranario.

State dinner with emir

Al Sabah will host a "state dinner" for Ms Arroyo, who will stay in Kuwait only for four hours. She is returning to Manila on Monday.

In Manila, Malacañang officials were keeping their fingers crossed.

"The President will go to Kuwait to talk to the emir of Kuwait on the case of Ranario," Executive Secretary Eduardo Ermita said.

Ermita said that Ms Arroyo's trip to Kuwait was confirmed only late Thursday night.

Malacañang's prayer

"*Harinawa magkameron na magandang resulta ang pagbisita ni Pangulong Arroyo sa emir ng Kuwait* (Let's pray that President's visit with the emir of Kuwait would produce a good result)," Ermita said.

Ms Arroyo, her husband Jose Miguel Arroyo and their children—Evangeline and Representatives Diosdado and Juan Miguel "Mikey" Arroyo, with their wives—along with a large presidential party visited France, Spain and the United Kingdom in a span of eight days.

Ms Arroyo's official visit to the UK ended Thursday (early morning in Manila). She and her family returned to Spain via Sevilla.

With her decision to fly to Kuwait, Ms Arroyo and her family would have to skip a scheduled tour of churches and historical landmarks in the ancient cities of Cordoba and Granada, home to monuments, cathedrals, palaces and mosques. *With a report from Christine O. Avendaño*

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Top of the (dung)heap

EDITORIAL

IT'S NO LONGER SURPRISING. THE PHILIPPINES has become such a regular fixture in the hall of shame of international corruption that it would be big news if it landed outside the disgraceful circle of the world's most corrupt countries. In the latest corruption survey of 60 countries by the Berlin-based Transparency International, the Philippines landed 10th among those countries where petty bribery was rampant.

The Global Corruption Survey 2007 of households on their experiences found 32 percent of the respondents saying they paid a bribe to obtain a service in the past year. That put the Philippines in the company of the world's worst offenders, topped by Cameroon, where 79 percent said they paid bribes, and Cambodia which had 72 percent of respondents saying the same thing.

An earlier survey on corruption also done by Transparency International, the results of which were released in September, placed the Philippines in the 131st slot among 180 countries, ranked from the cleanest to the dirtiest. It scored a sorry 2.5 on the corruption perception index (CPI), using a scale from 0 to 10, where 0 indicated the highest level of corruption and 10 the lowest. Only Indonesia, among its neighbors, was a little bit worse, with a score of 2.3, even as Thailand got 3.3, Malaysia, 5.1 and Singapore, a very enviable 9.3.

Another survey, done in January-February this year among foreign businessmen by the Hong Kong-based Political and Economic Risk Consultancy, found the Philippines getting the worst rating among 13 countries in Southeast Asia, edging out Indonesia for that dubious distinction. On a scale of 0 to 10, where 10 is the worst possible score (not 0 as in the Transparency International index), foreign businessmen based in the Philippines gave the country a rating of 9.4.

While it is bad enough that the Philippines is consistently ranked among the world's most corrupt countries, what makes the situation worse is that corruption is perceived to be getting worse. The PERC score of 9.4 for this year is sharply higher than the 7.8 the country got in 2006. In Transparency International's CPI, the country's score remained unchanged from that of 2006 at 2.5, but it slipped in the rankings from 121st place to 131st among the 180 countries surveyed. And in the survey on bribery, the percentage of households that paid bribes in 2007 was actually double that of the year before.

But in the eyes of Malacañang officials, such perceptions do not reflect reality. The chief of the Presidential Anti-Graft Commission, Constancia de Guzman, has been quoted as saying in reaction to the latest survey, "We will take it as a cue to look at our policy. But while bribery is a problem, it is declining because the people have more awareness of it."

There is no question about public awareness of the problem, for who hasn't heard of the many scandals involving corruption and bribery in high places—like the aborted ZTE-NBN contract, the NorthRail project and the distribution of cash to congressmen and governors right inside Malacañang, to mention some of the latest ones? But it's hard to imagine how anybody can say with a straight face that the problem is declining, given the growing number of corruption cases coming to light and the progressively larger amounts involved.

Such self-deception is alarming because it means that the end is nowhere in sight for such thieving and robbing, whether petty or grand. In fact, such an attitude would prove some 29 percent of Filipino survey respondents right—the ones who see corruption rising in the next three years.

Which is sad, because that would make the poor victims many times over. As Transparency International noted, the poor are more likely to fall prey to such predatory practices since individuals with higher incomes are likely to resist such bribe demands. "Too often, poor people must part with their hard-earned money to pay for services that should be free," said its chair, Huguette Labelle. Another official pointed out that because the police and the judiciary in many countries are "part of the cycle of corruption ... corruption is interfering with the basic right of equal treatment before the law."

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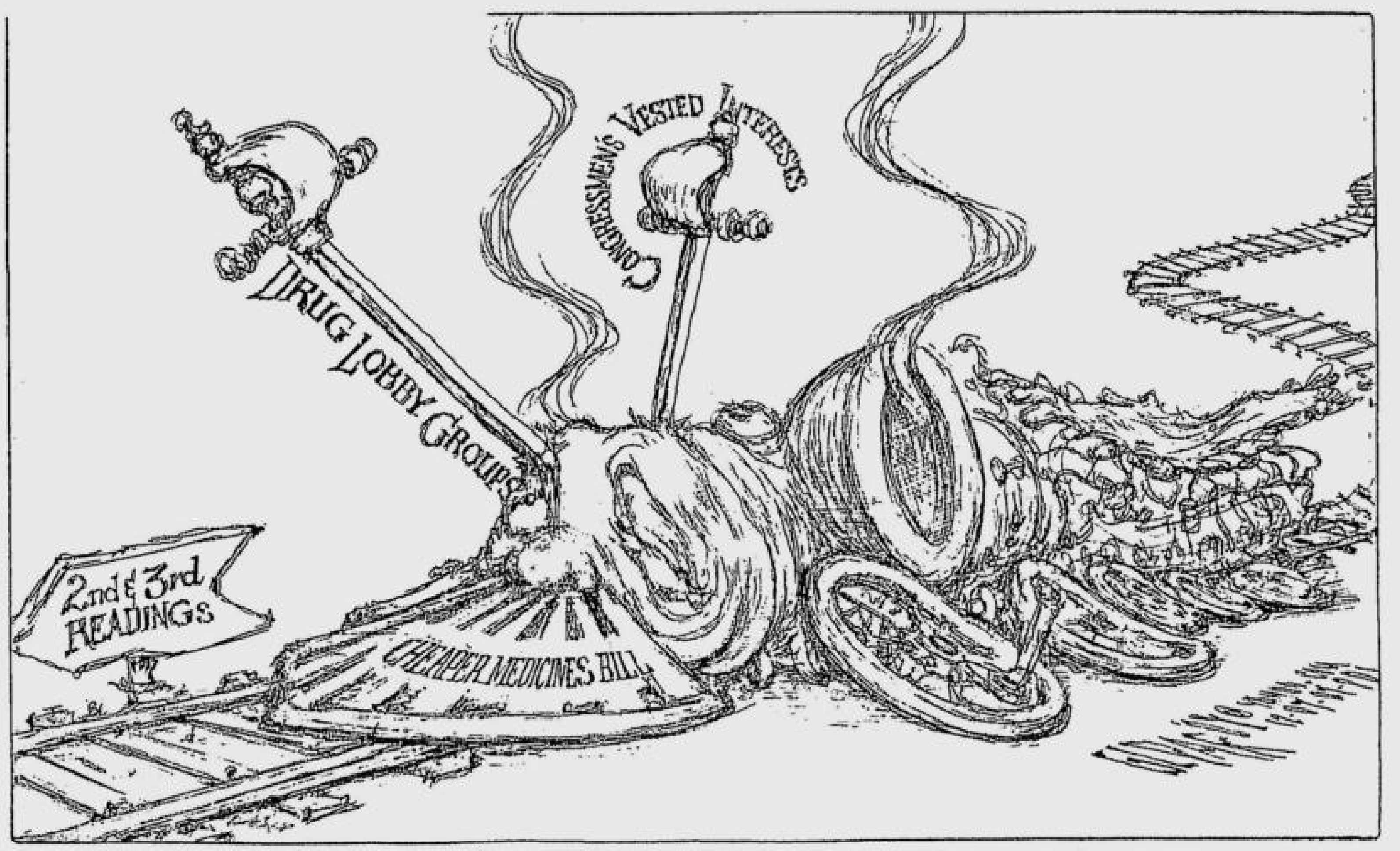

The quest for the new

PUBLIC LIVES

Randy David

IN 1972, WHEN FERDINAND MARCOS declared martial law, the population of the Philippines was approximately 45 million. Today, there are close to 90 million of us. But, beyond this demographic doubling, our society has become complex in many other ways.

As individuals, we find ourselves less constrained by tradition. We are freer to choose our life partners and our careers. We are also freer to dissolve relationships when they are perceived not to work. More of us are now prepared to travel farther away from home in search of work. Our loyalties have become more transient, our faiths more varied. Our spirituality has a broader range than that of our ancestors. What we call the fulfilled life now has countless variations.

The world out there has itself become vastly different. It offers far more opportunities than we have ever known in previous times. But the dangers that await its explorers have also multiplied, and often we find that our culture has not prepared us to face these risks with confidence. And neither has our government made adequate provisions to protect us in extreme situations, even as it practically drives us away to earn a living abroad. About 10 percent of our people now live and work in about 192 countries, making us one of the most highly dispersed nations in the world.

Our expanded and multi-layered encounters with the outside world have made our society extremely porous and vulnerable. We experience this not only in the wide array of consumer goods and services available to us, but also in the sheer novelty and range of information that shapes our impressions of the world and our notions of the possible life. Our value systems are dramatically shifting, and we are often shocked by what we can now accept as permissible. This process is very unsettling, but we Filipinos adjust very quickly, often surprising ourselves by our uncommon resilience. The accumulation of these little adjustments produces a sea change in the internal structures of our society, as well as in our expectations of how we should conduct ourselves as a nation.

We realize that we can no longer follow those thoughtless ways we associate with the negative side of our culture without exposing ourselves to the dangers of societal dissolution and chaos. This lies at the core of our political crisis. In the beginning, the quest for reform takes the form of a call for a return to basic values. Thus we desperately scan the horizon for trustworthy individuals who embody them. Then we realize that these values themselves have become so general and so far removed from concrete situations that, even as they retain their rhetorical function, they provide little useful guidance on how to solve the moral puzzles of everyday life.

This is where we are today. We find ourselves grappling with the enormous complexity not only of the world but of ourselves as a society. The old practical rationalities and moral maxims embedded in our culture no longer work for us. Every attempt we make to patch up a little hole in one institution only seems to produce larger holes in another. We are torn between the call for moral revolution and the call for social revolution, and yet, strangely, whether we opt for one or the other, we fall back on the search for trustworthy leaders.

The sociologist Niklas Luhmann's warning should speak to us: "Systems are rational to the extent that they can encompass and reduce complexity, and this they can only do if they possess understanding of how to make use of trust and distrust without placing too heavy demands on the person who finally shows trust or distrust: the individual." On this, I am quite certain that we have spent more time looking for individuals who deserve our trust than in nurturing rational systems we can trust.

This quest for bigger-than-life exemplars imbued with ethical purity is not very different from the search for messiahs. As a singular solution to the complex problems of a modernizing society, it will fail because it unrealistically puts the entire burden on the personal steadfastness and all-encompassing wisdom of leaders.

This is not to say that rational systems have no use for trustworthy individuals. In periods of transition, when so much public cynicism needs to be dispelled, institutions can be enormously strengthened by the recruitment of credible persons into their fold. But, the rationalization of institutions can only be meaningfully achieved at the operational level. This is not done overnight. It is accomplished in everyday practice, by the slow inculcation of a new ethos of equality, and through the power of persistent example.

Unfortunately, the impulses of the old order are still actively at work in every sphere of our national community. They trade on the quick and the familiar, undermining long-term programs of reform. This is what heightens public despair, and paves the way for dangerous attempts at final all-or-nothing solutions.

But I remain hopeful. I like to believe that the modern way of thinking is already upon us. We see it in the demand for transparency and accountability in public service, in the insistent call to preserve the autonomy of the legal system and the civil service. We see it too in the public yearning to de-politicize the police and the Armed Forces. But above all, we see it in the many urgent efforts of civic groups and movements to override the existing culture of patronage by restoring self-respect and self-reliance among the poorest of our people.

* * *

Comments to public.lives@gmail.com

Injustice in snail-paced CARP implementation

GET REAL

Solita Collas-Monsod

IT BEARS REPEATING THAT ALMOST 20 years after the government undertook its constitutionally mandated (Article XIII) agrarian reform program, only 18 percent of the privately owned land targeted for compulsory acquisition and redistribution is actually in the hands of agrarian reform beneficiaries (ARBs). At this rate, it will take another 80 years to complete the program.

This snail's pace is exemplified by the experience of the Sumilao farmers, who are in our midst after a two-month, 1,600-kilometer march. Their story also provides us with very important insights into the abuse of power.

The Notice of Coverage for the compulsory acquisition of the 144 hectares of land that the farmers are claiming, was served on the private landowner, NSQRMDC (hereinafter referred to as Q, for Quisumbing) 18 years ago.

The payment for the property, valued at P2.4 million, was deposited into a trust account 16 years ago at the Land Bank for Q's account.

The certificate of land ownership (CLOA) was issued to the farmers (137 of them at the time) 12 years ago by the Department of Agrarian Reform. Yet, as of this writing, none of them own the land. Worse, the land is now owned by San Miguel Foods Inc., which bought it five years ago from Q. The farmers, or more accurately 59 of the original 137, are still landless, and have been joined by another 40 landless farmers in seeking title to the land. The other 78 of the original 137 now own some 66 hectares of land (less than one hectare each) which they acquired some four years ago from landowners who voluntarily offered the land.

Who kept them from their land? Obviously, Q. And it certainly looks like he had the active cooperation of municipal and provincial officials. But even that would not have stopped the transfer from going through, because the DAR (under then Secretary Ernesto Garilao) would not be dissuaded from its mission. What stopped the DAR and the farmers in their tracks was the Office of the President (through Executive Secretary Ruben Torres); and the death blow to their dreams was delivered by none other than the Supreme Court. And if one is permitted an analogy, they were not even allowed to rest in peace—grave robbers and mutilators got into the picture.

Briefly, here is what happened: Plan I seemed to be to claim exemption from CARP coverage because the land was being leased. It failed, because DAR merely suspended coverage until the lease was up. Plan II was to convert the land from agriculture to industrial/institutional, with the enthusiastic cooperation of the municipal and provincial government which seem to have been dazzled by Q's conversion plan that included everything but the kitchen sink (Development Academy, agro-industrial park, forest development, mini-zoo, hotel, restaurants, housing project). The DAR turned the conversion application down for a very simple reason: the law absolutely prohibited (non-negotiable provision) irrigated land from being converted from agricultural use. The property, aside from being prime agricultural property, was irrigated.

The DAR then awards the CLOA to the farmers.

Plan III kicks in. Q goes to the Court of Appeals, and Bukidnon Gov. Carlos Fortich protests to President Fidel Ramos. Enter Executive Secretary Ruben Torres, who reverses the DAR, and allows the conversion plan, turning down the DAR's two motions for reconsideration. The Court of Appeals becomes moot.

The farmers, their backs to the wall, take advantage of an expired TRO against them, enter the property on the basis of their CLOA. Violence ensues: their houses are burned, their carabaos are let loose and farm implements are confiscated. Farmers then go on a 28-day hunger strike, which draws national and international attention, particularly because it is close to election season.

FVR steps in with a "win-win" solution that gives farmers 100 hectares, the other 44 hectares to Q to pursue his conversion plans.

Q balks. Goes to Supreme Court for relief. The Court initially dismisses the petition on a technicality, then changes its mind. It not only decides that the win-win solution is null and void (leaving the Torres decision in play), but that the farmers are not a "party in interest" because they are only "recommendee farmer beneficiaries" (utterly ignoring the CLOA issued to them).

The Court then dismisses the motions for reconsideration of the DAR on a technicality, i.e., filed six days past the deadline (but this time, does not change its mind).

Thus, nine years after Q gets the Notice of Coverage, he wins. He can keep his land and pursue his conversion plan. Farmers have zilch.

Here's the kicker: Q does not do anything toward conversion (at least as far as DAR inspection shows). What he does is sell the land to SMFI in 2002 (within the five-year period) allegedly for a very pretty penny, the transaction allegedly facilitated by Bukidnon Gov. Jose Zubiri (this is the grave-robbing analogy).

But the law on conversion is clear: If the conversion is not accomplished within five years, the land reverts back to agricultural. And any changes in the plan must be first approved by the DAR. Which is why the farmers are marching: to get back that land.

But there seems to be a PR campaign going on, with the SMFI cast in the role of an innocent buyer in good faith (with all its lawyers?) and the farmers—and agrarian reform—as bad guys: agrarian reform doesn't work, and those farmers are neither landless nor are they Higaonon.

All lies. Social injustice.

Agrarian reform through peaceful means

SOCIAL CLIMATE

Mahar Mangahas

EVERYONE KNOWS THE SAYING THAT ABSOLUTE corruption results from absolute power. In the agrarian setting, the absolutely powerful are those landlords who exploit their economic power to bully rural people into placing them in political office as well, and who do not hesitate to use the police or the military, if not their own private armies, to enforce their will.

The farmers who walked 1,600 kilometers from Sumilao, Bukidnon to Manila in the last two months were blocked by force from the lands to which they were issued Certificates of Land Ownership Award (CLOAs) in 1995, under the Comprehensive Agrarian Reform Program. I have seen videos of the black-bonneted private guards surrounding the property. A number of farmers died in pursuing their claim. And so the story of Cabesang Tales in "El Filibusterismo" resonates to this very day.

As long as such absolute and oppressive power still exists in the countryside, and thus continues to stoke the fires of revolutionary hatred, agrarian reform is incomplete. It is fortunate indeed that some farmers who have been denied justice for so long are still trying to use peaceful means in their cause; not all are as patient.

Since genuine agrarian reform radically changes the balance of power, it needs compulsion to be carried out. Such compulsion can be very violent, as in Russia and China; it can also be relatively bloodless, as in postwar Japan and Taiwan, both militarily controlled at the time. It is not essential to a genuine reform that landlords be divested of economic wealth, since they can be financially compensated. They should use the compensation to transfer their economic base to urban areas, drawing a lesson from the friar lands purchase during the American occupation.

The friar lands purchase. The Treaty of Paris of December 1898 stipulated, among other things, that the United States would respect the property rights of Spaniards in the Philippines. At that time, many friar estates had already been occupied by Filipino revolutionary forces. The way the United States respected the friars' property rights was by paying the friars for their lands.

Immediately after the Philippine-American war (1899-1902), the US colonial government purchased the major part—some 159,000 hectares—of the friar lands. It did not try to eject the *revolucionarios* by force, lest the war be rekindled.

For political considerations, the United States agreed to purchase prices which were considered higher than the market value of the land. In his history of the Church in the Philippines, the Dominican priest Fr. Pablo Fernandez even boasted that it was his order that haggled the longest over the land price, and that Governor General Robert Taft gave in because he was in a hurry to finish the matter.

In effect, the United States solved the friar lands problem by spending the money of American taxpayers instead of the lives of American soldiers. The friars remained wealthy in financial terms—for instance, I suppose they invested in San Miguel Brewery, where religious orders held board seats as late as the 1950s—but their political power in the rural areas was eliminated.

The American purchase of the friar lands mollified the Filipino revolutionary leaders, whose prime demands had included the restitution of the friar lands "to the people." These leaders had intended to divide up the lands among the fighters in proportion to their respective contributions to the revolution.

Actually, most of those who eventually acquired the friar lands were not the tillers themselves but some revolutionary leaders, *inquilinos* (middlemen who formerly collected the rents and administered the lands in behalf of the friars), and American agribusinesses, especially those interested in sugar.

In particular, Gen. Emilio Aguinaldo obtained a lease on 1,050 hectares of an Imus, Cavite estate on which he had not been an occupant, for a rental of 20 cents per hectare per year, which was lower than what others had paid on the same estate. That sounds like a behest-lease.

In addition, many Spanish *hacenderos* whose lands had been seized by the *revolucionarios* sold their holdings to the *principalia* during the early years of the American occupation because they had no means to reoccupy the lands, and were uncertain about their prospects under the new colonial regime.

By one historian's assessment, the inequality in agrarian-based wealth and power was neither increased nor decreased by the American regime. By 1910, there were still about 40,000 tenants on the former friar estates, of which 45 percent had been acquired by only 82 buyers and 492 lessees. The holders of agrarian power merely changed from predominantly Spanish to predominantly Filipino plus some American.

The old *revolucionarios* were bought off, but the maintenance of intense inequity in access to agricultural land in the 20th century allowed their places to be taken by new revolutionaries. The complete removal of the extreme inequities is a compelling necessity. The crucial question is whether it can happen through peaceful means.

* * *

See my "Distributive Justice in the Philippines: Ideology, Policy and Surveillance," in "Reflections in Development in Southeast Asia" (Institute of Southeast Asian Studies, 1988), and sources cited therein, particularly Jose N. Endriga's "The Friar Lands Settlement: Promise and Performance" (Philippine Journal of Public Administration, 1970).

* * *

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Education as a community affair

COMMENTARY

Philip Francisco Dy

THE CRISP AND COOL DECEMBER AIR CONTRASTED sharply with the warm spirit emanating from St. Mary's University in Bayombong, Nueva Vizcaya, last Dec. 3. The warmth came from the zeal and enthusiasm of community leaders supporting the campaign to improve public education in their municipality. It was the launching of Jollibee Foods Corporation's "Busog Lusog Talino" (BLT) project, an in-school feeding program for more than 200 Grade 1 and 2 students of seven elementary schools in Bayombong. The project is part of the 57-75 Movement, a campaign to reverse the education crisis, in partnership with the local Department of Education, the local government of Bayombong, St. Mary's University and Jollibee Solano.

Bayombong is a second-class municipality in Nueva Vizcaya. It is the center of major government and educational institutions and is bustling with service industries that support mostly government employees and students. Bayombong relies primarily on income from being a government and academic center.

Bayombong's most important asset is its human resource so it came as a shock to Mayor John Severino Bagasao to learn that the average achievement scores of their elementary pupils for school year 2006-2007 is only 53 percent, below the already dismal national average of 59 percent.

"The poor academic performance of soon-to-be employees and students of higher education greatly undermines the future and potentials of our municipality that relies heavily on the capacity of its human resources. It is imperative to immediately address this concern; otherwise, Bayombong might literally be left behind," noted Mayor Bagasao. So he immediately signed up as one of the 57-75 Movement's pilot sites.

Bayombong is quite familiar with participatory governance. Since 2006, the Jollibee Foundation and AIM-Mirant Center for Societal Divides have been training community leaders from both Bayombong and Santa Fe on the social technology of Bridging Leadership.

The Citizen-Responsive Governance project brought local stakeholders together in a dialogue process, resulting in a shared Municipal Development Agenda that now serves as the centerpiece program in Mayor Bagasao's second term. Addressing the education crisis is one of the major elements of this agenda. A Multi-Sector Committee on Education was also formed to lead the efforts to realize the Education Agenda. Members of this Committee—the Municipal Planning and Development Office, Saint Mary's University, DepEd supervisors of Bayombong's districts—also comprise 57-75 Task Force-Bayombong.

The Committee immediately identified the seven lowest performing elementary schools in the municipality that would receive assistance for the first year under the 57-75 Movement. Priority was given to the in-school feeding project to improve attendance of students and reduce the dropout rate. While the schools are already implementing feeding projects from the meager income of canteen earnings, the feeding activity was mostly sporadic and done as part of the already heavy workload of the "nutrition coordinators."

As part of the national Task Force 57-75, Jollibee Foundation provided technical assistance to the seven schools to improve their capacity to scale-up the feeding program. Based on its own experience in implementing the BLT project in Manuel L. Quezon Elementary School in Tondo and on that of Kabisig Kalahi Foundation (an NGO focusing on community-based feeding program), Jollibee Foundation incorporated parent involvement in managing the feeding project. Planning the lunch menu and supervising the cooking are done by the school's nutrition coordinator; marketing, cooking and actual feeding are done by the parents. This eases the burden on the educators and teaches parents how to cook and serve nutritious but affordable meals. Jollibee Foods Corporation funded the daily feeding at P10 per child and also sponsored a seminar for parents on the proper feeding of students by the Food and Nutrition Research Institute. The Kalinga Mission Center, the community extension arm of St. Mary's University, will continue to hold monthly seminars on Nutrition, Health and Parenting, with volunteer faculty and students as lecturers.

Mayor Bagasao meanwhile committed the support of the chairmen of the barangays where the seven schools are located. They will set up suitable cooking areas in each school and supplement with other food items the daily allocation per student. The rural health units will conduct monthly weighing of students covered by the feeding program. The Diocese of Bayombong will teach parents to produce fuel-efficient and environment-friendly clay stoves called *silkalan*.

Jollibee's BLT project aims to address hunger and improve the health condition of the students so they can attend and actively participate in class.

By involving the parents themselves, Jollibee BLT hopes that proper feeding practices will start at home. Mayor Bagasao, on the other hand, is determined to show that with community involvement, every student can learn well in Bayombong.

On that cool December morning, it was heartwarming to see a local education alliance beginning to happen. Through the opening prayer, the stakeholders vowed to "[serve] God and one another so that, together, we reach out to bring back the warmth of humanity."

Philip Francisco Dy is the training manager of the AIM-Mirant Center for Bridging Societal Divides and has been assisting Bayombong in the Citizen Responsive Governance Project.

Unthinking AFP officials, unusually efficient solons

BETWEEN DEADLINES

UNCLASSIFIABLE. A DOCUMENT PURPORTEDLY coming from the military pictured the Philippines as a country on the verge of a political upheaval. According to this document, President Macapagal-Arroyo is the target for ouster by a well-organized, well-funded, well-orchestrated coalition which includes her key allies, opposition leaders, the Church, business, media, civil society, professionals, academe and ideological groups such as the Social Democrats and the Communist Party of the Philippines-New People's Army.

The document even linked a foreign group to this supposedly grand oust-GMA movement said to be bigger than the oust-Marcos drive in 1986.

But a close examination of this classified document shows an ill-researched report based on media stories, unverified rumors, Internet postings and supposedly eyewitness accounts of various opposition gatherings which were open to the public.

Some data were either outright fabrications or sheer disinformation. An example is the College Editors Guild of the Philippines (CEGP), said to be a "left organization" whose "writers" were being "recruited" by the Philippine Daily Inquirer.

The fact is: the PDI does not "recruit" but accepts qualified applicants who pass a battery of tests and interviews. CEGP membership is not among the criteria.

Thinking military officials should be able to see beyond the "information" peddled in such reports. The question is: are they still thinking?

F. Zamora

* * *

CRACKING THE WHIP. As chairman of the powerful finance committee that oversees the government's budget, 83-year-old Sen. Juan Ponce Enrile made sure the Senate kept to its schedule on the national budget debates.

On Nov. 27, the second day of the debates, Enrile arrived half an hour ahead of the 10 a.m. start of the day-long session. By 10:30 a.m., however, the session had not yet started, with Sen. Loren Legarda, the first in the line-up of senators who wanted to debate, saying she had to "review [her] notes" first.

Sen. Edgardo Angara volunteered to start the ball rolling, but before deliberations finally got underway Enrile said a mouthful about how "people are treating [the budget] in a cavalier way."

After that outburst, the following sessions always started on time, even when deliberations the previous day lasted well up to the night.

Not even the Nov. 27 earthquake shook Enrile's concentration. When Sen. Antonio Trillanes IV pulled off his Peninsula Manila caper on Nov. 29, Sen. Francis Escudero joked on the sidelines that perhaps the Senate should postpone the budget debates so the senators could monitor the "exciting" events. But a serious Enrile went on with the deliberations without any reference to the Makati incident.

Later in the afternoon, Legarda suggested on the floor that the Senate should be commended for doing its work despite the turbulence.

Enrile also had help from sub-committee chairmen Senators Miriam Defensor-Santiago, Angara and Joker Arroyo in defending the budget. But when Santiago left to join the President's Europe trip, Enrile took over defending the budgets of the departments she handled.

The other senators also did their share, having been forewarned to prepare ahead if they wanted to debate the budget allocation of agencies they were interested in.

"It is very embarrassing for a senator to ask for information during a debate. You are supposed to be armed with the information if you are going to debate an issue," Enrile said.

Even Sen. Ramon Revilla Jr., who does not join plenary deliberations, participated in the debates—once, when the budget of the Department of Public Works and Highways was taken up. (On Dec. 4, the day of his "word war" with Optical Media Board chairman Edu Manzano, Revilla did not use the opportunity to question the agency's budget.)

Only Sen. Lito Lapid was not heard from during the budget debates. *D. Pazzibugan*

* * *

HISTORY LESSON. It's not always easy to go up against your boss—or even a former boss.

This was what Assistant Solicitor General Amparo Tang must have felt when she found herself on the opposite side of a case from former Solicitor General Francisco Chavez.

"I wish I was arguing with him and not against him," Tang said when it was her turn to speak during the Dec. 5 preliminary hearing at the Court of Appeals on the habeas corpus petition of Maj. Jason Aquino, one of the soldiers detained in connection with the failed February 2006 mutiny.

But despite the awkwardness of the situation, she said it was her duty to represent the military officials who had been named respondents in Aquino's petition questioning the legality of his detention.

"Duty states that I have to argue against my former solicitor general," she said.

L. Salaverria

* * *

BLAST FROM THE PAST. From the Dec. 21, 1990 issue of the Philippine Daily Inquirer:

House Minority Floorleader Salvador Escudero III made it a point not to invite any of his colleagues to his birthday bash Tuesday night at the Escuderos' Kitanlad St., Quezon City residence.

"Bakit pa? Para ako lang ang bida, di ba?" **(What for, I should be the star tonight, isn't it?), he told House reporters.**

In the same party, the Sorsogon solon surprised his well-wishers with a "double proclamation": "I have some good news for all of you. The first one just happened several minutes ago. The other has yet to happen. OK, the good news is Purefoods won over Alaska in tonight's PBA match. The other good news is—Cory has resigned."

While attending to his guests, Escudero held on to a half-empty bottle of Beer (na Beer). Later, he confided to House reporters, "props *lang ito*."

Bursting my bubble

YOUNG BLOOD

Florence Binua

We want to know what the young are thinking about. What are their thoughts on current issues? We welcome contributions from the twentysomething and below.—Ed.

I AM A DOCTOR. IT WAS A CHILDHOOD FANTASY TURNED into reality. I had my first doctor play set at 4 years of age. From then on, I knew that I wanted to be a doctor. Every hospital visit further strengthened my resolve to be one. I admired the doctors in their immaculate white coats, with stethoscopes dangling from their shoulders. I feared their presence but was inwardly grateful for it. I hated their power over me yet I felt secure because of it.

An aunt tried to persuade me to take up nursing. She offered to pay for my tuition fee and all other school expenses, if I would choose the career she had picked for me. She discouraged me from going into medical school. I told her I had a high respect for nurses, but that was not my calling. I wanted to be a physician, and that was what I was going to be.

When I went to medical school, I learned that my chosen profession required a lot of sacrifices. We spent sleepless nights reading our books, drank pots of coffee, and dozed off in the library. We took one exam after another, dissected cadavers, and incessantly peered through microscopes. As our high school friends became engineers and scientists, we were still struggling through the difficulties of medical school. While they were already enjoying their first paycheck, we had to live with our meager allowance.

On the first day of medical clerkship, adrenaline was rushing as we had our first "code blue." We had to restrain ourselves to keep from panicking and did whatever we could to be of help. Alas, we lost our first patient. There were more code blues and in time, we learned to serve with grace under pressure.

It was an emotional roller coaster-ride for all of us. With the loss of every patient came pain. With every patient restored to health came bliss. As the days passed by, there was more excitement, depression, high spirits and dejection. In time, we learned how to deal with our emotions: to force a smile even if we are feeling down, to feign confidence in spite of uncertainty, and to be strong for our patients. Every heartfelt "thank you" we receive from our patients, every smile of gratitude, every life saved, made our exhaustion disappear and our profession worthwhile. Truly, I find fulfillment in this noble profession.

So like everyone else, I was appalled when "Desperate Housewives" insulted those who "graduated from some medical school in the Philippines." We do not deserve this slur. It burst my bubble and crushed my pride. I think of all the sleepless nights I have spent, of the Christmas and other holidays I could not spend with my family because I had to stay at the hospital, of the countless times I felt exhausted while attending to patients, of my parents who are scrounging every centavo to get me through medical school, and I ask myself if all these were in vain. For somebody who has yet to start her medical career, that insult was intolerable.

Now with head held high, I encourage my colleagues to prove those behind that episode wrong. I ask our senior colleagues to guide us so that we will be as competent and skilled as they are now. I have chosen this profession and I stand by it. I have graduated from a medical school in the Philippines and I am proud of it.

To our professors who do not get tired educating and training us, we thank you for sharing your experience and passion. We will strive to be the best in our chosen profession.

Florence Binua, 25, is a medical intern at the University of Santo Tomas Hospital.

Why please others?

Genesis Dolde

WHY DO WE NEED TO PLEASE PEOPLE? IT'S GOOD TO check your every move, every word and every breath to see if it is proper. But to do things to please other people makes as much sense as speaking in sign language over the phone. Everyone as them has his own set of standards which may seem achievable but impossible to meet. They are waiting for any sign of a mistake that they can use against you and to ruin everything you've worked hard to build. Even those who don't know you that well are quick to judge and criticize.

I suppose it is human nature to be unsatisfied, to search for mistakes, to notice people's blunders. Maybe they do this to feel superior and right, or to simply ridicule others for the fun of it. They have a crab mentality that makes them pull down others who are doing well.

It's hard enough to please your peers, but doing the same to those who are older and who presume to know better since they've "been there and done that" requires even more work. It saddens me to realize that the individuals we, the generation of DOTA (Defense of the Ancients) and other PC games, and cell phones, look up to are sometimes the ones who disappoint us. They claim that with their knowledge and experience, they are better than us. But they are no better than little brats who whine non-stop when they do not get what they want or simply gossip.

Sometimes you can't help but wish they would just shut up. If they must talk, can't they say nice things about other people and take note of their good deeds and achievements? Do they feel good ganging up on somebody else? Doesn't constructive criticism sound better than back-stabbing?

I am reminded of a strategy used in "Defense of the Ancients" which can be applied in other games. You set up an attack behind the prey so you have the element of surprise. With its defenses down and with very little time to react, it is unable to retaliate and therefore easier to bring down. Better yet, you find an ally and "gang-bang" the target, making it feel outnumbered, helpless and hopeless.

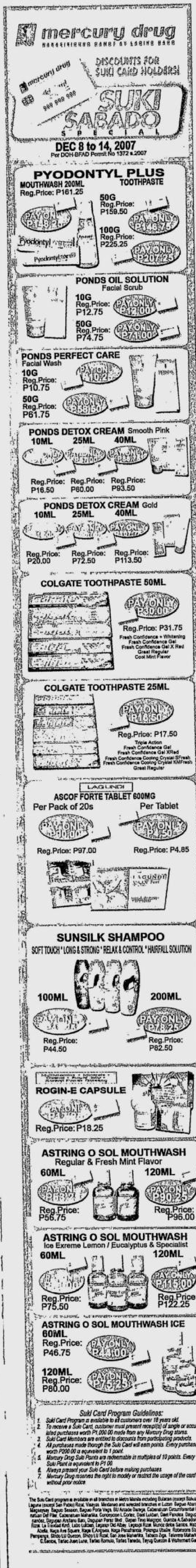
Life is a constant challenge, an everyday battle for survival. So what do you do? You fight. You stand up. You rise to the occasion and prove all of them wrong. Instead of whining, show everyone how good you are. And if all else fails, leave everything to God. Pray for it, and pray for them. They may not listen to you, but the Father up there surely will.

So don't live life trying to please others. Keep doing good and please the One who really counts. Please Him and leave to Him everything, including your hurts and your pains. As the saying goes: "Do your best, and God will do the rest."

Genesis Dolde, 21, is a BS Materials Engineering graduate of the University of the Philippines in Diliman.

NOTICE TO YOUNGBLOOD CONTRIBUTORS:

Send your contributions by e-mail to youngblood@inquirer.com.ph together with your address, age and the school, course and year you're enrolled in or, if employed, the position you're holding and the company you work with. Contributions to Youngblood should not have been previously published.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Crucial '2-year boundary' at hand

THE TAKEOVER OF THE PENINSULA Manila Hotel by Sen. Antonio Trillanes IV, Brig. Gen. Danilo Lim and their band of rebel soldiers and civilian supporters is but one of the many failed moves to oust Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo from power. It was a quixotic effort, to say the least, which failed to get public support even though the majority of the Filipino people are fed up with the abuses, rampant corruption and brazen disregard for propriety and civility in governance, which they believe the Arroyo administration is guilty of.

While we approve of the goal Trillanes and company wanted to achieve, we do not believe that the method they used was right. The senator might have gained prominence (or notoriety) because of what he did but he is not a step closer to the desired objective.

The live CNN coverage I saw on TV showed me part of what Trillanes is. He cannot answer media questions coherently and he does not look like a charismatic speaker to me. I will not fault him at once as he was surely under great stress then, understandably.

No such actions are likely to succeed in our country as long as the military and the police are under the command of people like AFP Chief of Staff Gen. Hermogenes Esperon who has been linked to Ms Arroyo's alleged acts of cheating and corruption, as well as to what many people perceive as her design to plunder and rob the Filipino people of their freedom of choice and of their nation's wealth. Esperon and GMA's partnership is a symbiotic relationship: she with her grip on equally greedy politicians and he with his finger on the trigger.

We saw how a military vehicle rammed the doors of the Peninsula and how ready those soldiers were to kill their brothers-in-arms on the other side of the fence. Even Defense Secretary Gilberto Teodoro was in disagreement with the degree of brutal force the soldiers were willing to employ. It was an overkill.

The imposition of curfew from 12 midnight to 5 a.m. was also a knee-jerk reaction. The arrest of journalists covering the incident was uncalled for. They were just doing their job.

The 2010 presidential elections is fast approaching and that year is nearing the "two-year boundary." In 1973, a presidential election was supposed to be held. In 1971, or two years before the scheduled election, Marcos declared martial law, cancelled the elections and ruled the nation with an iron fist until 1986 when he was finally deposed.

Are we seeing a repetition of history? Haven't they ever learned?

God help this poor country.

—RAMON MAYUGA,
GeRMayuga@aol.com

Rejection is best safety net against Jpepa

CONTRARY TO THEIR EARLIER CLAIMS, government negotiators are now finally admitting that the Japan-Philippines Economic Partnership Agreement (Jpepa) will have adverse effects on our people, hence the need for "safety nets." But no amount of safety nets will be enough precisely because Japan's intention is to create conditions for the maximum exploitation of the Philippines' natural and human resources.

The country's experience with the World Trade Organization (WTO) since 1995 clearly shows that the so-called safety nets are only token mechanisms that have completely failed to stop the disastrous effects of free trade. We reiterate: the best safety net against Jpepa is its complete rejection.

The Supreme Court did find the WTO agreement constitutional, but the subsequent trade liberalization has had disastrous effects on the Philippine economy, severely damaging local agriculture and forcing millions of Filipinos to go abroad to seek work. The Supreme Court has a reason to revisit its arguments in Tañada et al. vs Angara, et al.

The main beneficiaries of trade liberalization are First World corporations; their share of manufacturing sales has grown from 56 percent in 1999 to 75 percent in 2004.

The negative effects of trade liberalization are reflected in the refusal of underdeveloped countries to accept the deeper liberalization being pushed by First World countries through WTO. For this reason, the United States, Japan and the European Union nations are seeking further liberalization through bilateral free trade agreements such as the Jpepa. These countries are also using such agreements to force countries to accept liberalization issues, such as investment, government procurement and competition policy, which have been rejected at WTO negotiations.

If the government is prepared to truly develop the domestic economy and does not want to surrender it to foreign traders and investors, then safety nets are not needed. If it is not, then no safety net will be good enough.

—ARNOLD PADILLA,
spokesperson,
No Deal! Movement Against
Unequal Economic Agreements

Learning from people who are taking a stand

OUR SINCERE APPRECIATION GOES out to all the INQUIRER staff members who rushed to the aid of Conde, the horse who was worked so hard that he dropped in the street. (INQUIRER, 11/18/07)

While it's heartbreaking to think that the only kind words or gentle hand he ever knew came at the very end of his life, at least he was given the painless peace he deserved. If the newspaper staff had not intervened, it was possible that Conde's owner would have tried to force this sick, crippled, starving horse to haul one last load.

Let Conde stand for all the animals who are used and battered until they have nothing left to give. Let us all learn a lesson from those people who took a stand instead of standing by.

Rest in peace, Conde.

—ROCHELLE REGODON,
campaigns manager,
People for the Ethical Treatment
of Animals Asia-Pacific (Peta),
RochelleR@PETAAsiaPacific.com

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LETTERS

'Not the worst 2-term president'

I READ JOHN NERY'S NOV. 6 COLUMN in which he described "the younger George Bush," as "the worst two-term president in US history." I beg to differ.

Did Nery take into consideration Bill Clinton, who almost turned the White House into a whorehouse for two terms?

Dwight Eisenhower? He did absolutely nothing. Harry Truman? He dropped the atomic bomb and stopped World War II, but did nothing else.

Nery might think I'm a "Bush fan." But he would be wrong to think so.

Bush and other politicians have made me uncomfortable. I'm an independent voter. I vote for the man and not for the party.

Bush is certainly not my ideal, but I would vote for him again, because after 9/11 he didn't just talk about action, he took action, and the world is safer now because of him. I also like him because he says what he means, and means what he says, plus the fact that, unlike the President of Philippines, he is not a thief.

Still, Ronald Reagan was my favorite. He was a strong man and a leader. To be sure, the United States propped up Ferdinand Marcos, until the Reagan administration got tired of him. Just like the US government now propping up Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo. I wonder how long this will last. Until Washington, D.C. finally gets tired of her bribery, election fraud, corruption, human rights violations? US officials won't let her go on forever if enough Filipinos here start making a big noise.

I did enjoy Nery's column, and wish to see more in the same vein. My wife is a Filipina—which is why we are really upset with the Philippines' corrupt government.

—STAN KING,
stan_pi@yahoo.com

'Illusion of innocence'

PERMIT ME TO REFUTE MATTERS STATED in Robert Sison's letter. (INQUIRER, 11/27/07) Sison is bold in assertions, wrong in facts and fractured in reasoning.

1. Sison claims his client, Imelda Marcos, never deliberately delayed her cases. Wrong. Ms Marcos has criminal cases in Manila, Quezon City and the Sandiganbayan. Sison should not lump them together and claim that from their inception up to the present, the prosecution has presented and still presenting me as a witness. I have not testified in the other cases of Ms Marcos. I have testified 35 times (not 33) on direct examination at the Sandiganbayan in cases involving about 10 Swiss foundations. These cases did not move for about four years because of an inhibition issue involving a Sandiganbayan justice elevated to the Supreme Court. Ms Marcos' 32 criminal cases in Manila were delayed because she kept on elevating issues to the Supreme Court. Somehow, she was able to wangle the dismissal of some of these cases. But eventually, the Supreme Court itself ordered the reinstatement of the dismissed cases.

2. I never assisted the Presidential Commission on Good Government in negotiating with any Marcos lawyer or Marcos family member. As a principle of law and personal policy, there should be no compromise with thieves. This was why I caused the annulment of the PCGG-Marcos agreement in December 1998 (Chavez vs PCGG, 299 SCRA 744).

3. Sison cannot blame the duration of time before a case is finally resolved by the Supreme Court, for this is the very same flaw in the judicial system that Ms Marcos herself has availed of and benefited from.

4. I am the prosecution witness (referred to by Sison) who went up to the Court of Appeals and obtained a TRO and, eventually, a preliminary injunction because the trial court judge, after aborting the presentation of prosecution evidence, was set to acquit Ms Marcos. What the Court of Appeals enjoined was not the criminal prosecution of Ms Marcos but the promulgation of judgment set by the trial court. No decisional law has been violated by the Court of Appeals. Sison went up to the Supreme Court but his plea for a TRO was not granted because the petition is riddled with substantive and procedural infirmities.

5. Sison may brag about Ms Marcos' acquittal in other cases but I must mention that, in those cases, I was never presented by the prosecution as witness. All told, I have been summoned to testify for the prosecution only before the Sandiganbayan and the RTC-Manila, but not before other courts which went along with her illusion of innocence.

—FRANK CHAVEZ,
citizen, 117 Gamboa St.,
Legaspi Village, Makati City

Pathetic loser

I HOPE THIS NEW REBELLION CASE AGAINST Antonio Trillanes IV will lock him up for good. Enough for this "KSP" (*kulang sa pansin* or attention-starved) wacko.

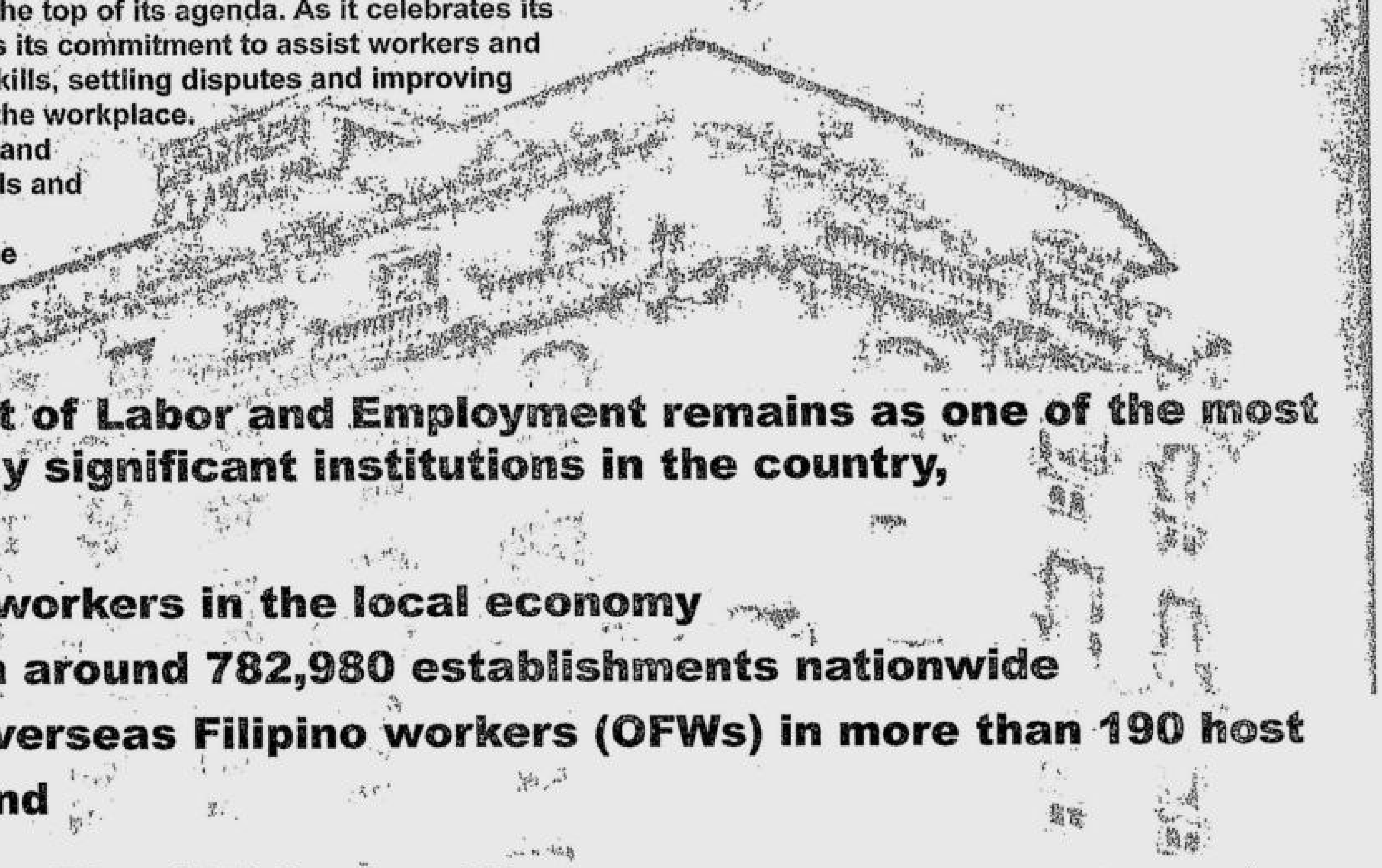
Those who voted for him kicked themselves when he made that irresponsible and unsubstantiated accusations on the Glorietta explosion. His political stock practically went down to the septic tank after that.

So, what the hell is he thinking? That there are still a lot of people who believe in him? Probably by now, he has already realized that he is a pathetic loser.

—JOHN DEE, jon_dee01@yahoo.com

DOLE sa 74:
Serbisyong Laan sa Mamamayan, Laan sa Bayan!

Since its beginnings in 1933, the Department of Labor and Employment (DOLE) has been extending services and implementing programs with the well-being of the Filipino workers at the top of its agenda. As it celebrates its 74th anniversary this year, the DOLE renews its commitment to assist workers and employers in providing jobs and qualified skills, settling disputes and improving harmony, productivity, health and safety at the workplace. Among its numerous programs are training and equipping workers with relevant quality skills and knowledge, ensuring fair and just working conditions, and providing welfare assistance and benefits to all Filipino workers, here and abroad.



At 74, the Department of Labor and Employment remains as one of the most relevant and economically significant institutions in the country,

Serving:

- **36.1 million workers in the local economy**
- **Employers in around 782,980 establishments nationwide**
- **4.6 million overseas Filipino workers (OFWs) in more than 190 host countries; and**

Networking on a Three Plus (3+) basis with:

- **Its direct Social Partners, i.e. management and labor and**
- **Other stakeholders like the LGUs, the academe, non-government organizations, civil society, and other partners**

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SERVICES: Administrative Service • Financial and Management Service • Human Resource Development Service • Planning Service • International Labor Affairs Service • Information and Publication Service • Legal Service •

Messages

Warmest felicitations to the officials and employees of the ***Department of Labor and Employment*** *(DOLE) as you celebrate your 74th founding anniversary on December 8, 2007.*

Through the years, the DOLE has been an effective and dependable institution looking after the well-being of our workers, both here and abroad. It has pursued policies and programs with determination to ensure that the significant concerns of various stakeholders in the labor and employment sector, including our social partners, are properly addressed.

The DOLE's anniversary theme for this year, "Serbisyong Laan sa Mamamayan, Laan sa Bayan," underscores the government's overall commitment to the public, particularly the Filipino worker. Likewise, it reflects the DOLE's success in implementing government programs and projects aimed at sustaining a productive Filipino workforce, generating a peaceful labor front, and maintaining a culture of safe and healthy workplace.

Today DOLE has evolved into a more responsive institution covering a broader sphere of clients, which include the informal sector workers, families of overseas Filipino workers, and other vulnerable sectors of the society. Indeed, under the able hands of Secretary Arturo D. Brion, the DOLE has reached milestones that it can always be proud of.

I wish all the men and women of DOLE a meaningful celebration, and may you continue to be dedicated public servants.

Mabuhay kayo!

Gloria Arroyo
GLORIA MACAPAGAL-ARROYO
President
Republic of the Philippines

I extend my warmest greetings to the ***Department of Labor and Employment (DOLE)*** *as it celebrates its 74th founding year on December 8, 2007.*

I congratulate the respected men and women of the DOLE for your utmost commitment in bringing about an unprecedented era of industrial peace and harmony between labor and management. Indeed, this momentous achievement has contributed immensely to our present economic progress that us likewise unparalleled for quite a long time.

Your theme "DOLE sa 74: Serbisyong Laan sa Mamamayan, Laan sa Bayan!" echoes your dedication to raise the bar of excellence in the government service to new heights. I hope that this event will inspire our fellow civil servants to rise above mediocrity and face the wide-ranging challenges of public service with dignity and integrity.

I exhort you to remain steadfast in your keenness to develop a culture of professionalism in the service, as it will indeed hasten our pursuit of achieving sustainable development for our country.

MABUHAY!

NOLI 'Kabayan' DE CASTRO
Vice President
Republic of the Philippines

On this special day for the DOLE, let me proudly express my unabashed feelings for the Department and its people. I am very fortunate to have served the DOLE and to have known the brand of service, the joy in serving, and the camaraderie its officials and employees are noted for. I salute you all, officials and employees alike, past and present, for your significant role in building this nation.

For the past 74 years, the Department has been an ever-present and reliable institution looking after the well-being of our workers and of their employers. From very humble beginnings, it has grown from an agency with purely local concerns, to one whose responsibilities span the globe, 190 countries at last count. Its local concerns have grown from the formally employed workers to the informal sector of the workforce — the self-employed and the vulnerable ones such as our women, the youth, the disabled, and our indigenous people earning their living in their ancestral lands. From the professionals working overseas about four decades ago, the Department has thereafter managed the contract migration of workers of all kinds of skills and professions, land-based and sea-based, looking at all phases of overseas work from pre-deployment to their reintegration to Philippine society after toiling overseas.

All these achievements the Department accomplished through the men and women who unselfishly served and gave their all to carry out the Department's mandates — the preservation of industrial peace and harmony; the care for the workingman's workplace welfare; and the growth of employment by linking the employers and their job vacancies with the jobseekers who will man the production lines and deliver services. They did all these, doing their best and without counting the costs, even under adverse circumstances.

Maraming salamat sa inyong serbisyo sa mamamayan at sa bayan!

ARTURO D. BRION
Secretary
Department of Labor and Employment

INQUIRER Visayas

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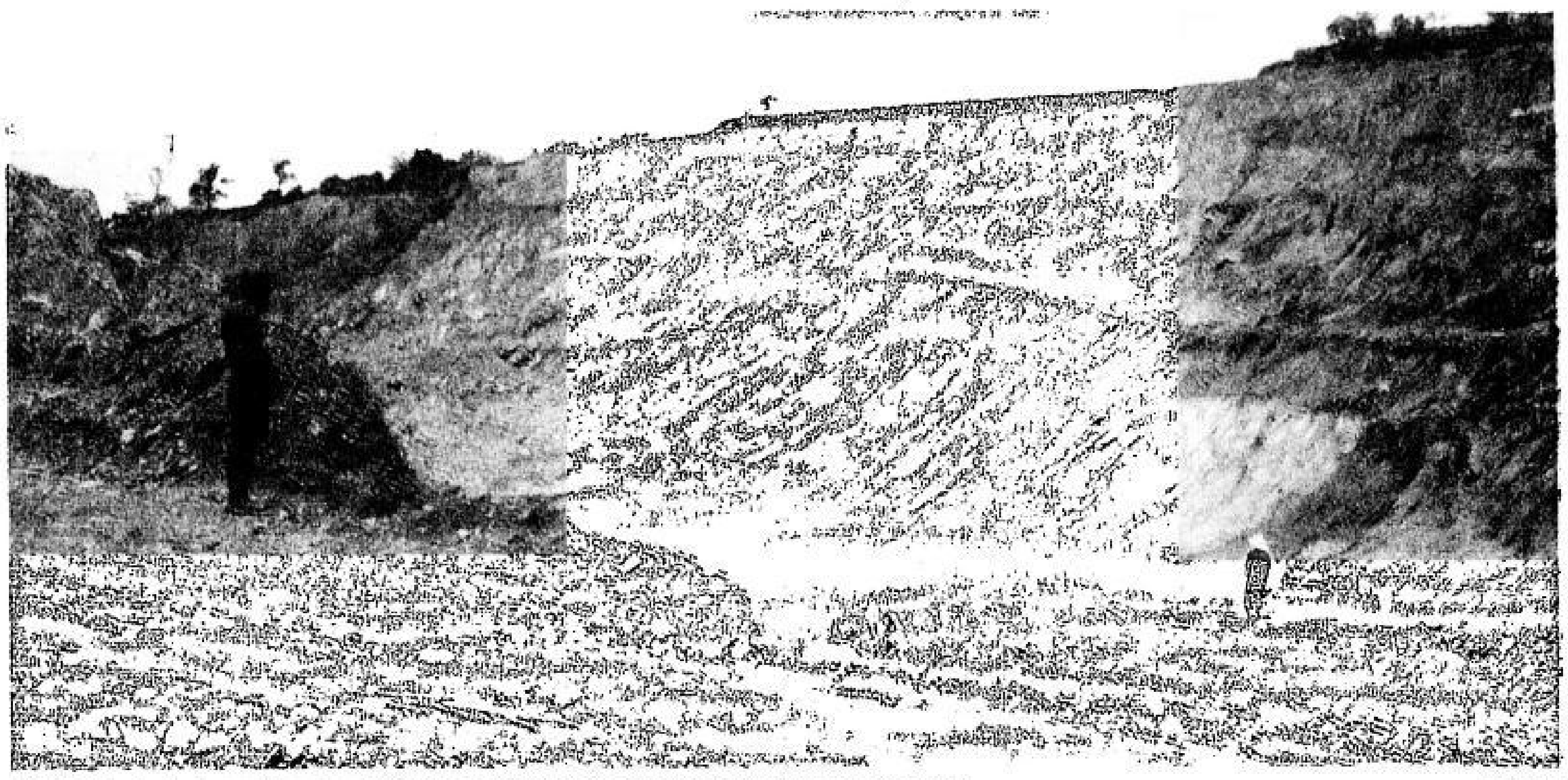
Mining stirs hornets' nest in Samar

By Vicente S. Labro
Tacloban City



THIS old photo shows the area in Manicani Island that was mined of nickel ore by HMC.

FILE PHOTO

TO MINE OR NOT TO MINE HAS remained an unresolved issue in Samar.

But the Mines and Geosciences Bureau is optimistic that the conflict between the provincial board and the mining company exploring for minerals in Samar will soon be settled.

Officials of Pacifica Alumina Mining (Philippines) Corp. (PAMC), which is exploring the country's biggest reserve of bauxite (aluminum ore) in the province, have asked the board in a series of communications for the lifting of a work stoppage order it imposed on the firm about three months ago.

The board, however, has begged for more time, saying it was still consulting with stakeholders.

> Samar is known to have an estimated value of $21 billion in bauxite deposits

Samar is known to have an estimated value of $21 billion in bauxite deposits. A large portion of the reserve area, however, is within the 333,300-hectare Samar Island Natural Park, a protected area.

Bauxite is the main source of aluminum, which is being used in packaging, transportation and building.

In a phone interview at his office in Catbalogan City on Tuesday, Vice Gov. Jesus Redaja confirmed the PAMC appeal, saying it had already suffered financial losses and schedule delay.

PAMC has also reminded the Sangguniang Panlalawigan that actual mining would provide more job opportunities and income from taxes, aside from the construction of mining roads and the establishment of an agro-forestry.

15,000-ton sample

The vice governor explained that the officials could not easily allow the mineral exploration to continue because of many environmental issues to be discussed first with concerned residents.

The board, he said, only learned of the project when it was informed of the presence in a Catbalogan village of a huge stockpile of earth dug by the mining company from different sites in at least three towns.

Redaja said he later learned from the engineers of PAMC, who were invited to the regular SP session on Sept. 14 to shed light on their operation, that the volume of earth samples was already about 5,000 tons and that a total of 15,000 tons must be sent to China for laboratory testing to determine the bauxite deposits in the areas.

Also called to explain were representatives of the MGB and the Department of Environment and Natural Resources in Samar.

PAMC was required to submit all pertinent documents about the exploration. The mining company and the MGB later complied with the request.

Redaja said the officials wanted all aspects of the mining operation transparent and "in black and white," meaning they should be furnished copies of the mining development plan and other papers.

Board Member Jimmy Dy said he was against mining because it might lead to environmental degradation that would cause floods and landslides as what occurred in the past.

More importantly, a mining ban exists in Samar, Dy stressed. Ordinance No. 541, which was approved by the provincial board in October 2003, imposes a 50-year moratorium on large-scale mining in Samar.

In its Sept. 10 session, the board passed a resolution directing PAMC "to immediately stop all ongoing exploration work program and mining activities" in the towns of Motiong, Jiabong and Paranas, all in Samar, "until all to be submitted pertinent documents relative thereto are found in order."

The SP members believed that irregularities were committed "in the compliance of mining permit requirements." They also questioned the huge volume of earth samples taken.

MGB regional director Loreto Alburo said he was hopeful that the documents had "enlightened" the SP members on the legality and procedures of undertaking mineral exploration.

Green light

In an earlier interview, Alburo said the huge volume of samples taken from the field was not unusual. "This is actually the request of the (Chinese) plant, and our central office endorsed this request to us for approval," he said.

"This relates to technical feasibility study in the plant site. It's more on the metallurgical side," he added.

If a sizable mineral deposit was discovered, this would lead to a declaration of a mining feasibility. But the firm would have to first obtain an environmental compliance certificate and other permits and documents.

"When the feasibility study is approved, that's the time they (miners) will have the green light to start (actual mining operations)," he added.

Loreto also explained that PAMC was authorized to explore by Alumina Mining Philippines Inc. and Bauxite Resources Inc., which were awarded the mineral production sharing agreements (MPSAs) by the DENR.

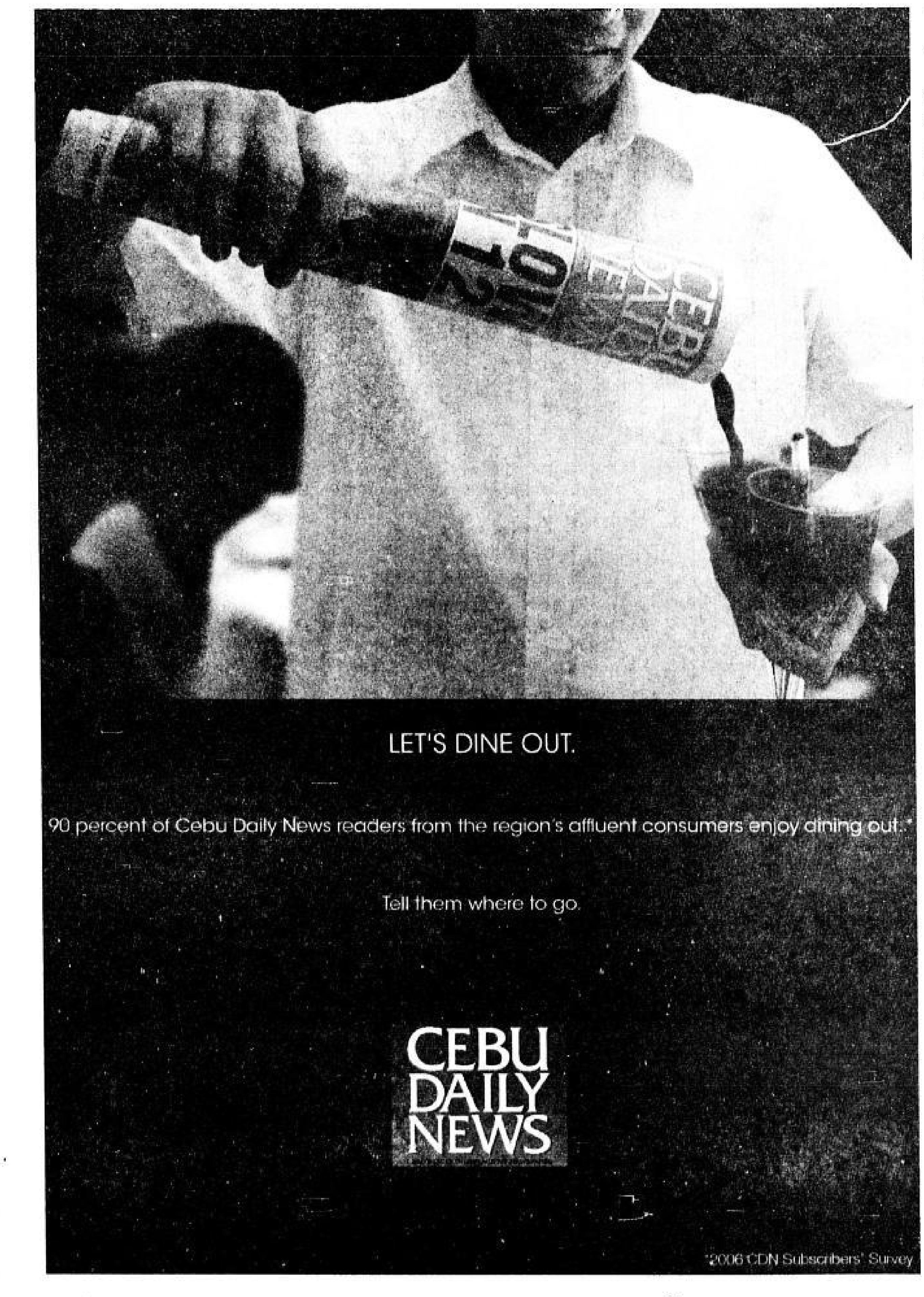
"They have an operating agreement. This is allowed under the law," he said.

The DENR approved the MPSA for Alumina Mining Philippines Inc. on Dec. 5, 2002, with a contract area of 6,694 ha in Motiong, San Jose de Buan, and Paranas.

It also approved on the same date the MPSA of Bauxite Resources Inc., covering 5,519 ha in Gandara, San Jorge and San Jose de Buan towns, also in Samar.

The issuance of the agreements, however, has stirred a controversy as local environmentalists, Church, academe, professional groups and other concerned Samareños strongly oppose mining and logging in the province.

They fear that these activities would result to irreparable environmental degradation.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CEBU DAILY NEWS
*2006 CDN Subscribers' Survey

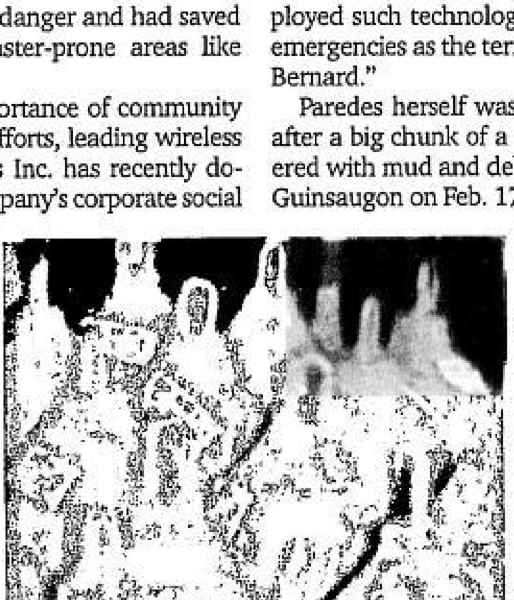
Bells you hope not to ring

By Vicente S. Labro
Maasin City

THIS KIND OF BELL IS WHAT PEOPLE would hope not to be ringing even on Christmas Day.

But if ever it would be rung, people would still be very thankful that it did sound the alarm of an impending danger and had saved lives especially in disaster-prone areas like Southern Leyte.

Recognizing the importance of community disaster preparedness efforts, leading wireless Smart Communications Inc. has recently donated as part of the company's corporate social responsibility some 100 "batingaws" or traditional bells to the United Nations Development Programme's (UNDP) Ready Project in disaster-stricken Southern Leyte.



EARLY warning devices like these bells could save the lives of thousands of rural folk.

CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

The four-year Ready Project includes, among others, the identification of disaster-prone areas through the production of multi-hazard maps and the installation of community-based early warning systems.

The UNDP-funded project aims to address the problem of disaster risk management especially in vulnerable towns and cities in the country.

"It's been said that the Philippines is a world leader in natural disasters. We have typhoons, floods, earthquakes, landslides and tsunamis. For that reason, we must strive to be world leaders in disaster preparedness, said Jane Paredes, Smart public affairs manager for Visayas-Mindanao.

But why would a high-tech wireless company donate an old-fashion warning device?

"We at Smart take a very pragmatic attitude towards technology. For us, it does not really matter all that much if an equipment is fancy or sophisticated. What's really important is whether it works. Does it do the job?' explained Paredes during the recent turnover of the 100 "batingaws" to the Ready Project in Maasin City.

In the past, people particularly in rural areas depended mainly on the fast beating of bamboos or iron rods and the continuous ringing of church bells to warn them of looming disasters like tornadoes, tsunamis, fire and earthquakes.

"In disaster preparedness," Paredes said, "we realize that we must utilize all possible tools. We have very sophisticated technologies like satellite phones, cellular phones and wireless broadband, and indeed, Smart has deployed such technologies in response to such emergencies as the terrible tragedy that hit St. Bernard."

Paredes herself was in St. Bernard shortly after a big chunk of a mountain slid and covered with mud and debris the entire village of Guinsaugon on Feb. 17, 2006 that killed more than a thousand people.

Smart provided people with communication facilities for survivors and relatives of the missing to contact relatives who were then outside of Southern Leyte, to inform them of the situation.

Many villagers died in the landslides in Guinsaugon and in other villages in Leyte and Samar in 2006, probably because there was no early warning device to forewarn the people of an impending disaster.

Nor were the residents of barangay Pinut-an in San Ricardo, Southern Leyte and nearby Liloan and Pintuyan towns forewarned that landslides and flashfloods were to occur on that fateful day of December 2003. More than 70 died in Pinut-an alone when tragedy struck.

Lack of early warning device could also be the reason about 5,000 had died when the killer flashflood hit Ormoc City in November 1991.

The *batingaws* donated to the province were rung when residents joined the simultaneous nationwide earthquake drill on Oct. 18 and the tsunami drill last month, spearheaded by the National Disaster Coordinating Council (NDCC) and other concerned agencies.

Smart has also donated 80 bells in the towns of Real, Infanta and General Nakar in Quezon, 20 bells in Sorsogon and another 100 bells in Surigao provinces as part of an NDCC project.

SATURDAY, DECEMBER 8, 2007
PHILIPPINE DAILY INQUIRER
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Quarry fund take speeds past ₱100M

CITY OF SAN FERNANDO—THE ADMINISTRATION of Pampanga Gov. Eddie Panlilio was close to hitting on Wednesday the P106-million that the government-owned Natural Resources Development Corp. had collected from fees and taxes imposed on Mt. Pinatubo's sand in 2001.

Collections from June 29 to Dec. 5 this year reached P105.678 million, a report from the provincial treasurer's office showed.

The amount was generated from the P150-administrative fee and P150-tax on every truckload of sand.

At least P53 million would be shared by the province, seven towns and about 15 villages on a 30-30-40 percent basis, respectively.

The collection's balance would be spent on regulatory activities.

Purchases

The P13-million quarry income put in the provincial government's general fund was used to buy medicines, school desks and chairs and to repair hospital facilities, provincial officials said.

Based on daily receipts paid by quarry operators at the provincial treasurer's office, the collections fluctuated from a minimum of P500,000 on some days and a maximum of P2 million near weekends.

Daily collections averaged P1 million.

Since June 29, receipts are valid for only three days to prevent their recycling.

The NRDC collection of P106 million from out of the P300-tax on every truckload of sand in 2001 was the lowest in the three years that it took over the supervision of the quarry industry since 1999.

Corruption

Former President Joseph Estrada ordered the takeover on the heels of alleged corruption when Sen. Manuel "Lito" Lapid was governor of Pampanga.

The highest amount that the NRDC drew was P154 million in 1999.

The agency gave a share of only P80 per truckload to the province and sand-rich towns and villages, which local officials protested then.

Earlier, the Panlilio administration also surpassed what Lapid and his son, Mark, collected from January 2004 to June 2007 in their stints as governor.

"We intend to stay the course of efficient collection but the new system stands to affect that," Panlilio told the INQUIRER, referring to Ordinance No. 176, which he vetoed but which the provincial board overrode.

Approved by the provincial board on the proposal of the Pampanga Mayors League, the ordinance changed in many ways the manner by which the capitol runs the quarry industry. *Tonette Orejas, Inquirer Central Luzon*

RELIABLE HELP

NIÑO JESUS ORBETA/INQUIRER SOUTHERN LUZON

A farmer in Barangay Libod in Camalig, Albay plows the field with the help of his reliable help, a carabao.

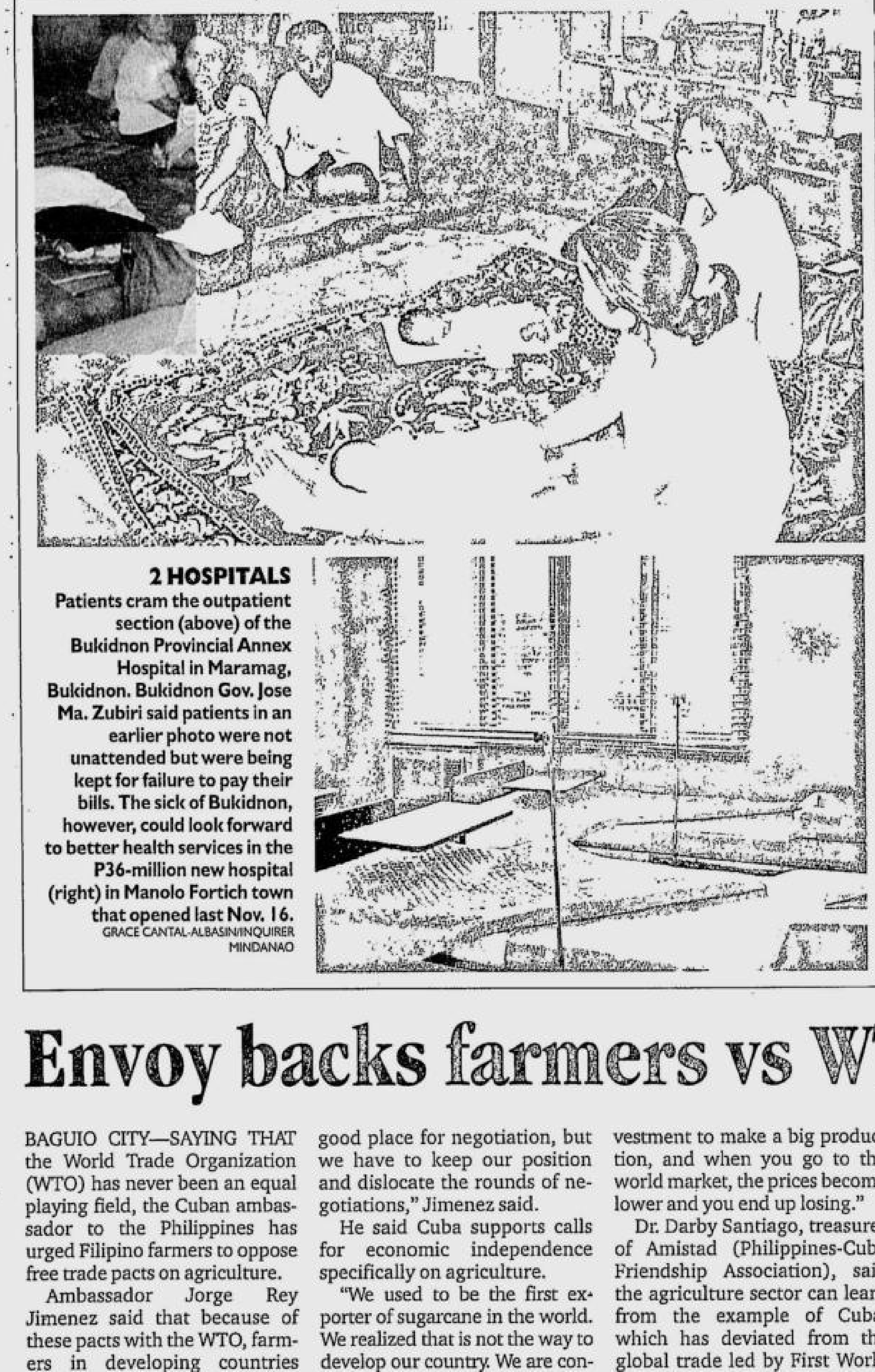
7 Sayyaf men to be moved to Manila jail

PUERTO PRINCESA CITY—Regional Trial Court Judge Chito Meregillano granted Thursday a motion filed by provincial prosecutors seeking the transfer to Manila of seven Abu Sayyaf suspects currently detained at the Palawan provincial jail.

The provincial government had petitioned the court for the transfer of the detainees, citing potential security threats that may arise from their continued presence in the province.

The suspects, who were arrested in a series of military operations in southern Palawan last September, have been charged with murdering a former companion, also a member of the Abu Sayyaf.

The suspects have been identified as: Abu Daizer, alias Daizer Yusof; Jemar Alfa, alias Abu Jaafar/Jemaar; Moadz Jala, alias Abu Moadz; Abdulla Abdurham, alias Abdullah; Omar Ibnu Jakarain alias Abu Mogera; and Najer Daud, alias Ben Saif Daud, and Yusop Hapipudin alias Abu Islam. *Redempto Anda, Inquirer Southern Luzon*



2 HOSPITALS

Patients cram the outpatient section (above) of the Bukidnon Provincial Annex Hospital in Maramag, Bukidnon. Bukidnon Gov. Jose Ma. Zubiri said patients in an earlier photo were not unattended but were being kept for failure to pay their bills. The sick of Bukidnon, however, could look forward to better health services in the P36-million new hospital (right) in Manolo Fortich town that opened last Nov. 16.

GRACE CANTAL-ALBASIN/INQUIRER MINDANAO

Zambales gov cries foul at Korean shipyard's no-VIP security rules

CITY OF SAN FERNANDO—Zambales Gov. Amor Deloso on Friday decried what he called "rude" treatment he received from officials of Korean shipbuilder Hanjin Heavy Industries and Construction Co. Ltd. a few hours before Vice President Noli de Castro led the inauguration rite of the firm's shipyard in Subic town on Dec. 5.

"They were very disrespectful toward me considering I was the governor of the province hosting their project. *Diskumpyado pa sila sa kin* (They distrusted me). It was demeaning," Deloso told the INQUIRER by phone.

He was referring to the 10 a.m. incident where, according to him, he was required to enter the main gate, join the long queue of visitors and pass the X-ray screen before he finally got a visitor's pass.

"I have no problem undergoing those if I went uninvited or I did a surprise visit but I was invited three weeks ago and I was excited to come. An invitation given in advance meant that you were expected so you don't necessarily have to go through all that process anymore," he said.

"Instead of pinning a lei on me, they gave me a visitor's pass," he rued.

All Philippine dignitaries, including De Castro, were required to go through the same process, he said.

"I was the only one who complained because I think, as public officials and being guests of a foreign investor doing business in the Philippines, we should all be accorded respect," Deloso, a lawyer, said.

"Indirectly, these Koreans are saying they are superior to us when they are on our land," he added.

Jong Pyeong Yu, HHIC-Philippines general manager, considered the incident "my personal fault."

"It happened because of the hectic schedule of our event and certain kind of miscommunication and misunderstanding. It is true that we were not able to assign respective Koreans for all those VIPs (because they were many and they arrived in several batches)," Yu said in a text message on Friday.

"I was supposed to be at the main gate when [Deloso] came but unfortunately [I] was escorting [Subic Bay Metropolitan Authority] personnel to the helipad where [De Castro] was about to land so only safety officers were at the main gate," he said.

Yu said Deloso had not been singled out. The company had put in place a standard protection and security protocol.

Yu said he was meeting Deloso to "express my sincere apology." *Tonette Orejas, Inquirer Central Luzon*

Envoy backs farmers vs WTO pacts

BAGUIO CITY—SAYING THAT the World Trade Organization (WTO) has never been an equal playing field, the Cuban ambassador to the Philippines has urged Filipino farmers to oppose free trade pacts on agriculture.

Ambassador Jorge Rey Jimenez said that because of these pacts with the WTO, farmers in developing countries have been dislocated.

He was guest in a forum on "Learning from Cuba and Venezuela Social Systems and Alternative Strategies under WTO" at the University of the Philippines Baguio on Thursday.

"We think that the WTO is a good place for negotiation, but we have to keep our position and dislocate the rounds of negotiations," Jimenez said.

He said Cuba supports calls for economic independence specifically on agriculture.

"We used to be the first exporter of sugarcane in the world. We realized that is not the way to develop our country. We are converting our economy from agriculture to services," he said.

"We support these kinds of approach from different countries because we once suffered from this kind of economic suicide.

"For example, in the case of sugar, you have to make a big investment to make a big production, and when you go to the world market, the prices become lower and you end up losing."

Dr. Darby Santiago, treasurer of Amistad (Philippines-Cuba Friendship Association), said the agriculture sector can learn from the example of Cuba, which has deviated from the global trade led by First World countries.

"Cuba is not in the WTO and yet it can survive and its economy is so much better than ours. We want farmers to know the importance of their work. As farmers in nation building, they are the backbone of the economy and their work is treated with dignity. They are the ones who are keeping this country afloat," he said.

He added: "It's proven already that we suffered the ill-effects because of the importation of vegetables from other countries such as China and Taiwan. Our farmers are losing a lot."

Windel Bolinget, secretary general of Cordillera Peoples Alliance, earlier said agriculture would always remain a contentious issue in the WTO as long as local farmers are shortchanged in the global trade. *Desiree Caluza, Inquirer Northern Luzon*

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Cops block Palace march; farmers weep

From page A1

in Quezon City, where they set up camp and a picket on Thursday night.

"We are pained that we have finally reached Manila, and yet cannot enter Malacañang. We don't know when our claim will be resolved. Is this the way it should be—that Filipino farmers can only get to the Palace gates?" a farmer said through a megaphone.

Linda Ligmon, 55, said she and the other farmers were engaged in a peaceful march to seek the help of President Macapagal-Arroyo and did not intend to hold a protest rally. She said they were saddened to be told by police that Executive Secretary Eduardo Ermita or any other Palace official would not receive them.

Before the farmers set off for Malacañang, Ermita reiterated the Palace's position that it would await the DAR's recommendation on the disputed 144-hectare property.

Told that Agrarian Reform Secretary Nasser Pangandaman had earlier told the farmers that his office needed time to study their claim, Ermita said the Palace would take action only after the DAR had submitted its recommendation.

Immediate action ordered

Later in the day, Ms Arroyo ordered Pangandaman to "resolve the problem immediately."

She issued the order at a Cabinet national security cluster meeting at the Makati Shangri-la hotel, which she convened via video conference from Sevilla, Spain, where she is now on a private visit.

"The President instructed me to resolve the problem immediately and to assist the farmers," Pangandaman told reporters after the video conference.

He said he would decide on the case after Monday, the deadline he had set for the farmers and San Miguel Foods Inc. (SMFI), the owner of the disputed property, to submit their position papers.

On Thursday night, Pangandaman's announcement to the farmers that he was giving the contending parties until Monday to submit their position papers was met with a collective groan.

"We received the case from Malacañang only last Nov. 22. There is due process that we have to follow, but I assure you, we will resolve the case at the soonest possible time," he told the farmers.

He also assured them of free electricity, water and toilet facilities during their picket.

But Napoleon Merida Jr., chair of the San Vicente Landless Farmers Association, said: "The position paper is unnecessary. Isn't the case very clear already? Our land titles were cancelled because Malacañang approved the land conversion petition of [former landowner Norberto] Quisumbing in 1996," he said. *(See timeline on Page 18.)*

The 30-minute dialogue between Pangandaman and the farmers was mediated by Akbayan Rep. Risa Hontiveros, Akbayan chair emeritus Etta Rosales and Lipa Archbishop Ramon Arguelles, who had earlier celebrated Mass for the farmers.

During the Mass, Arguelles reiterated the Church's call for the government to award the disputed property to the claimants.

Cardinal's letter

The farmers had planned to personally hand to the President a letter from Manila Archbishop Gaudencio Cardinal Rosales expressing support for their claim to the land. But because Ms Arroyo was still in Europe, they decided to seek a meeting with Ermita.

Lawyer Marlon Manuel pointed that both the Senate and the House of Representatives had received the farmers and listened to what they had to say.

SO CLOSE AND YET SO FAR: They traveled all the way from Sumilao, Bukidnon to Manila to personally plead their case at the seat of power. They could only see the Palace from a distance as police stopped them in their tracks on Friday. Eventually, they were allowed to get close to the gates. But that was all. REM ZAMORA

STOPPED at the Nagtahan Bridge by security forces, the Sumilao farmers are angry, also hungry from all that walking. The Palace gate was shut but Executive Secretary Ermita provided them with food packs. REM ZAMORA

SUDDENLY, DAR Secretary Nasser Pangandaman (center) shows up at the farmers' camp site outside the DAR office in the Elliptical Road, Quezon City, Thursday night. Sumilao farmers Elgin Bajekjek and Linda Ligmon engage him in a heated discussion.

"We're waiting to be allowed to get near the Malacañang gate," Manuel said shortly before noon. "It's painful for the farmers to be stopped this way, with only a few hundred meters to go. We can't understand why we can't even get near the Palace."

Nearly an hour later, Rev. Fr. Anton Pascual, Caritas Manila executive director, arrived to relay the Church's support for the farmers.

Pascual said Cardinal Rosales had issued instructions that spiritual and other support be extended to the farmers to help them get to Malacañang.

"Cardinal Rosales is monitoring this [struggle], because of what use is the government if it cannot give importance to small members of society like these farmers?" Pascual said.

"The Sumilao farmers' welfare should be the government's priority," he said.

Food packs

The group planned to go to Caritas Manila on United Nations Avenue for lunch, but food packs arrived at around 1 p.m.—courtesy of Ermita, according to Sr. Supt. Cipriano Querol, the Manila Police District's deputy director for operations.

The farmers initially offered the food to the policemen blocking their way, but the latter politely declined to accept it.

At 1:25 p.m., the blocking force walked away toward Malacañang—a signal that the farmers had been allowed to proceed.

The farmers clapped their hands in appreciation as Pascual and about five nuns joined them.

Querol said the farmers, the first group of marchers to get close to the Palace in years, were permitted to proceed because they had been assessed as a peaceful gathering.

Upon reaching the J.P. Laurel gate, where policemen stood their ground, a number of farmers took turns speaking through the megaphone to express disappointment at the prolonged resolution of their claim.

"We hope you will understand us," one said, his voice cracking. "Land is what we need to live and support our children. There in the Palace is a parent who will not allow us to even get near the gate. It's like that parent is abandoning his children."

Said another: "We've walked 1,700 km but no one is paying attention to our claim. How much farther do we have to walk for the issue to be resolved?"

At about 2 p.m., the farmers left, crossed Nagtahan Bridge and headed for Caritas Manila.

Hog farm

At the Shangri-la, Pangandaman said a team he had sent to investigate the farmers' complaint that the land conversion order on the disputed property had submitted its recommendation.

He declined to divulge the findings of the team, saying only that "there is indeed a development of a hog farm" on the property.

He said the DAR would determine whether the development of a hog farm was a violation of the land conversion order.

"If I find out there are violations in the conversion order, it will be revoked," he said. *With reports from Jerome Aning and Christine O. Avendaño*

TIMELINE

1990—THE DEPARTMENT OF Agrarian Reform places the 144-hectare estate owned by the Quisumbing family in Barangay San Vicente in Sumilao, Bukidnon, under the Comprehensive Agrarian Reform Program (CARP).

But DAR suspends implementation because the property is still under a 10-year Crop Producer and Grower Agreement between the landowner and Del Monte Philippines.

April 1994—The agreement expires.

Sept. 25, 1995—The estate is awarded to Higaonon farmers. DAR issues Certificates of Land Ownership Award (CLOAs) to 137 farmers.

Oct. 13, 1995—The CLOAs are entered into the Sumilao Register of Deeds. These form the basis of the farmers' claim of vested rights over the estate.

March 29, 1996—Executive Secretary Ruben Torres issues an order allowing the conversion of the property from purely agricultural to agro-industrial use.

In applying for reclassification, the Norberto Quisumbing Sr. Management and Development Corp. had said it planned to set up a development academy, a cultural center, an institute for livelihood science, a museum, a library, a golf course, a sports development complex, an agro-industrial park, forest development and support facilities, and a hotel, restaurant, and housing project and others.

Oct. 9, 1997—Fifteen farmers start a 28-day hunger strike in front of the DAR central office in Quezon City.

Nov. 6, 1997—President Fidel Ramos modifies Torres' order, limits the conversion to 44 hectares and approves 100 hectares for distribution to farmers.

April 1999—The Supreme Court denies with finality the motions for reconsideration filed by the claimants and upholds Torres' order despite opposition from DAR officials.

The decision also voids the CLOAs issued to the farmers.

Under CARP implementing rules, the estate's owners have five years to implement the new land-use plan.

December 1999—Robin Lession, one of the farmers in the 1997 hunger strike, commits suicide in protest of the Supreme Court decision.

Feb. 6, 2002—The Quisumbing family sells part of the property to San Miguel Foods Inc. (SMFI), a subsidiary of San Miguel Corp. (SMC). But farmers claim that "much of the land" remains idle.

The land is put under lease agreement with SMFI subsidiary Monterey Food Corp. (MFC).

Nov. 3, 2004—Farmers file a petition for revocation of the conversion order, saying the five-year period for the conversion of the estate's use for agro-industrial purposes has ended. They claim that none of the development projects promised by the Quisumbings has taken place.

July 10, 2006—MFC submits "Revised Development Plan for Sumilao Property" to DAR as a way of asking whether the development of the property into a hog farm is "in accordance with approved conversion of the property into agro-industrial use."

Oct. 27, 2006—Agrarian Reform Secretary Nasser Pangandaman dismisses the farmers' petition, saying DAR has no jurisdiction over the matter as it was the Office of the President that allowed the conversion in March 1996.

Nov. 27, 2006—DAR confirms revised development plan submitted by MFC, says the Sumilao Hog Farm project is "consistent" with the "agro-industrial use" clause cited in the March 1996 ruling by the Office of the President.

Nov. 30, 2006—Farmers lodge a petition at the Office of the President seeking the cancellation/revocation of land conversion.

Oct. 3, 2007—The Office of the President junks the petition.

Oct. 10—Farmers begin a 1,700-kilometer march from their home village of San Vicente in Sumilao to Manila, with the intention of reaching Metro Manila in time for the observance of International Human Rights Day on Dec. 10.

Their "Walk for Sumilao Land, Walk for Justice" is aimed at dramatizing their demand to be finally installed in the estate.

Oct. 23—Farmers complete the march's Mindanao leg, which totaled 435 km from Sumilao to Surigao City.

Oct. 25—They start the Visayas leg of the march.

Nov. 16—The Office of the President remands dispute to DAR, says the agency has the expertise on the factual issues raised by the farmers.

Dec. 3—Farmers arrive in Metro Manila. They begin their "tour" the following day and are met by members of militant groups at the Manila Film Center. They are later escorted to the Senate in Pasay City, where they are met by a number of senators.

Dec. 5—Manila Archbishop Gaudencio Cardinal Rosales expresses support for the farmers, says he has asked President Macapagal-Arroyo to give the estate to the farmers.

Farmers perform a tribal ritual in front of SMC main office in Pasig City to protest the corporation's "witting or unwitting participation in the mockery of agrarian reform."

DAR legal counsel says the law that created CARP does not state that a new owner of a disputed property is bound by the conversion pledges made by the previous owner.

Pangandaman adds that the five-year implementing period started when the development permits were issued by the Housing and Land Use Regulatory Board. SMC lawyer Wilfredo Peñaflor says permits were issued only in 2004.

Dec. 6—Farmers and their supporters picket the House of Representatives to call the lawmakers' attention to their plight.

Pangandaman meets with the farmers to say he is giving contending parties three days to submit position papers before he makes his decision.

Source: Inquirer Archives
Compiled by Kate Pedroso, Inquirer Research

After accounting mixup, '1/4 Filipino' is Miss California

From page A1

Miss Los Angeles, Christina Silva, only to backtrack days later, blaming a vote tabulation error.

Silva hired a lawyer, booked an appearance on "Ellen," and won support from a Los Angeles Times columnist who murmured in print of hanging chads. Silva, 24, lives in LA's Koreatown and is of Ecuadoran and Mexican descent. Was she too ethnic? Too urban? Did judges find some dirty secret in her past at the last minute?

'Human error'

California pageant executive director Keith Lewis stared out at cameras in a Beverly Hilton conference room hoping to tamp down speculation.

"This was a human error. We have apologized for it," he said. "I believe in the integrity by which we must stand. I'm here today to right that wrong of crowning the incorrect person."

To that end, last year's winner Meagan Tandy emerged wearing a black dress, and placed a tiara on Beezley's head to the sound of cheers from her parents and brothers.

"It is bittersweet," Beezley said of her win. "I just want her to know that it was not my fault nor her fault. This has been very hard for the both of us."

At any rate, it's another hit for Donald Trump's Miss USA pageant, which in the past year has seen state-level winners lose their titles for appearing in risque pictures and getting pregnant. Trump personally gave the overall winner, Tara Conner, a second chance after she was seen boozing at New York clubs and agreed to enter rehab.

Judges approached Lewis immediately after the Nov. 25 pageant finals in Los Angeles, concerned that their votes hadn't been correctly tallied. Lewis asked for a recount, and it turned out the points assigned to finalists had been reversed. He said he broke the news to Silva in a "lengthy, heartfelt, truthful" conversation, then the two of them called Beezley.

'Something fishy'

Beezley interrupted her waitress shift at DiNapoli's Firehouse Pizza restaurant in Barstow to take the call from the two of them on speakerphone. Beezley said Silva told her about the error and congratulated her, saying, "I do not want this crown and sash if I didn't rightfully win it."

The pageant let Silva, now listed as second runner-up, keep all her accouterments—the sash, the crown, the necklace—and gave her $1,500 entry fee back. But Silva now says she felt unfairly pressured to relinquish her title, and feels something is fishy about the "accountant error" reason supplied by organizers.

MISS CALIFORNIA USA
CALIFORNIA USA
K²

WILL THE REAL MISS CALIFORNIA PLEASE STAND UP? An accounting mix-up crowned Christina Silva (at left) Miss California during the Nov. 25 beauty pageant in Los Angeles. When the judges later complained, she was asked to give up the title to Raquel Beezley, the 2nd runnerup. Beezley posed with crown and sash at a news conference in Beverly Hills on Thursday. AP

"Everything's inaccurate and it's not consistent," Silva told Ellen DeGeneres during an "Ellen" show broadcast Thursday. "All I could do was shake and cry, just cry in my mom's arms."

Fil-Am

Beezley's mother Christine Parrish said she was upset about speculation her daughter was bumped up because she appears less ethnic. "I heard somebody calling her a whitey! It's sad," she said, noting that Beezley is one-fourth Filipino, had won a pageant in Mazatlan, Mexico, and judged a pageant in the Philippines.

Beezley, who hid her shaking hands behind a desk after being crowned, was disappointed that she and Silva would be lumped in with other scandals in Trump's pageant empire.

"The thing is, we didn't do anything wrong," she said. "We're both innocent in this case. It's crazy."

Beezley, who attends Barstow Community College, will represent California in April in the Miss USA pageant, and hopes to become a correspondent for "Access Hollywood."

There was also a happy ending for Silva. DeGeneres crowned her Miss Ellen and gave her a yearlong modeling contract and a year's worth of styling by Ken Paves or Prive hair salons. *AP*

Phone Pals trip Giants

Late Air21 errors give Ginebra payback

AIR21'S Wynne Arboleda (left) and Arwind Santos lock up Ginebra's Billy Mamaril in a battle for possession. RYAN LIM

GAME TODAY (*San Sebastian-Cavite Gym*)
4:30 p.m.—Red Bull vs Magnolia

By June Navarro

THE TALK 'N TEXT PHONE PALS escaped with a 101-98 victory over the Purefoods TJ Giants last night in a game that was decided at the stripe in the dying seconds of their match in the Smart-PBA Philippine Cup at the Cuneta Astrodome.

While the Giants muffed four of their last five charities, capped by a James Yap split, the Phone Pals snapped a mini-slide by nailing four straight freebies in the end.

Donbel Belano converted the assurance free throw with 8.5 ticks left after Jimmy Alapag and Yancy De Ocampo made theirs inside the last 30 seconds for the Phone Pals' sixth win in 12 games.

"We just kept pounding when things weren't going our way," said Talk 'N Text coach Derrick Pumaren. "We lost two straight games prior to this one and we didn't want another defeat."

The Phone Pals' victory denied the TJ Giants at rewriting their franchise history.

The Giants could have tied a 15-year franchise record with a victory last night, that would have enabled them to match their 10-2 start in the 1992 All-Filipino wars.

Instead, the Giants slipped to 9-3 largely because the team's normally reliable shooters, Yap and Peter June Simon missed their free throws when it mattered the most.

Yap and Simon led Purefoods with 25 and 22 points respectively.

In the first game, Barangay Ginebra nearly threw away a 19-point lead before holding off Air21, 108-103.

Rommel Adducul actually kicked off Purefoods' free throw woes, missing two attempts from the stripe. Simon followed suit, failing to complete a three-point play.

Yap then had a split in the last 28 seconds to seal the Giants' doom.

With three players—Yap, Simon and Kerby Raymundo, in the top 10 free-throw shooting list, the Giants are the No. 1 in that department with their conference-best 74.4 percent.

The Gin Kings cashed in on a pair of endgame boo-boos committed by the Express—Wynne Arboleda fumbled on a double dribble and rookie JC Intal committed a travelling violation in the last five seconds—to clinch their fifth win in 12 games.

Though the Kings avenged their first-round defeat to the Express, coach Jong Uichico wasn't absolutely satisfied about it.

"We have to get over that hump where we always play sloppy in the end," said Uichico, whose Kings lost to the Alaska Aces in an out-of-town game last week after losing steam in the stretch.

"We're still in the process of getting over that stigma, if that's what you call it," Uichico added.

The Kings zoomed to a 94-75 spread but the Express unloaded a 13-0 bomb on fastbreak plays with Arwind Santos and Ranidel De Ocampo playing pivotal roles.

The Express absorbed their sixth defeat in 11 outings.

The scores:

First Game

GINEBRA 108—Menk 19, Helterbrand 18, Caguioa 16, Mamaril 15, Salvacion 11, Tubid 10, Reavis 9, Artadi 8, Macapagal 2, Aquino 0.

AIR21 103—Santos 32, Canaleta 23, De Ocampo 14, Arboleda 13, Kramer 7, Se 5, Chia 4, Intal 3, Sotto 2, Cruz 0, Baluyot 0.

Quarters: 21-22, 46-52, 82-73, 108-103

Second Game

TALK 'N TEXT 101—Alapag 18, Washington 14, Carey 13, De Ocampo 13, Peek 10, Allado 10, Ritualo 9, Cardona 7, Belano 7, Aljamal 0, Ferreria 0.

PUREFOODS 98—Yap 25, Simon 22, Raymundo 19, Lanete 13, Adducul 8, Evangalista 5, Yap 4, Salvador 2, Pingris 0, Cablay 0, Yee 0.

Quarters: 23-28, 44-48, 71-all, 101-98

Thais dominate SEAG track events

More Sports, SEA Games stories A25 to A29

NAKHON RATCHASIMA, THAILand—Thailand dominated the first day of track and field Friday at the Southeast Asian Games, winning six of the nine gold medals on offer.

Thailand now has 28 golds to lead the medal standings, with Vietnam moving into second place with 13 golds.

However, Indonesia's Suryo Agung Wibowo won the men's 100 meter final, setting a new SEA Games record of 10.25 seconds to edge Thailand's Wachara Sondee in second and Malaysia's A. Hadi Mohammad Noor Imran in third.

Vietnam's Thi Huong Vu won the women's 100 race in 11.47 seconds despite a slow start, ahead of Thailand's Nongnuch Sanrat and Indonesia's Irene Truitje Joseph.

Thailand's Jutamass Tawoncharoen set the day's best time by winning her semifinal in 11.38 but did not take her place in the final because of an injury.

Four other SEA Games records were also broken during the day.

Vietnam's Truong Thanh Hang had the most dominant performance so far, bettering her own record to win the women's 1,500 meters in 4 minutes, 11.60 seconds.
AP

Miss Vietnam Sports steals show—and hearts

NAKHON RATCHASIMA, THAILAND—Usually the star attractions at the athletes' village of the Southeast Asian Games are the smattering of world-class competitors, but for the 2007 edition, it is the glamorous Miss Vietnam Sports.

The 20-year-old Tran Thi Quynh is a former national team volleyball player but is at the 2007 event to show moral support for her team, and is getting plenty of attention, at times too much.

An athletes village function preceding the Games saw her besieged by male competitors eager to get a photo with her.

"Five dollars for each picture," a Vietnamese official shouted to the crowd as it gathered around her.

A police officer deployed at the village said a Vietnamese male reporter scaled the fence of the village Tuesday and was attempting to get to the Vietnamese women's section in an effort to get a photo of her.

"I am here to give moral support and to lift the spirit of Vietnam's athletes, and I am confident that our team will perform well and reach a good ranking in the competition," Tran Thi Quynh said.

* * *

ENVIRONMENTAL sentiment was prominent in the opening ceremony Thursday, but organizers could be accused of sending mixed messages as they handed out thousands of disposable plastic toys.

Following the lighting of the cauldron at the main stadium, spectators witnessed an elaborate environmental promotion as the entire infield was draped with a pink banner with the words "Save the World."

Girls dressed in green tutus and floral wreaths, and boys in forest sprite outfits were attacked by long-faced ghosts in neon orange, symbolizing global warming.

They were then joined by more youths, waving potted plants.
AP

TRAN: $5 for her picture

14-year-old So RP's newest grandmaster; Ni champ

From page A1

and 28 days, the seventh youngest in the world to do so.

Unable to gain headway with the white pieces, So readily accepted Maghami's truce offer after 19 moves of the Sicilian Najdorf to qualify as the country's eighth and youngest GM.

He joins Eugene Torre, who became Asia's first GM in 1974, the late Rosendo Balinas (1976), Rogelio Antonio Jr. (1998), Buenaventura "Bong" Villamayor (2000), Nelson Mariano (2004), Mark Paragua (2005) and Darwin Laylo (2007) in the elite list of Filipino chess players.

"*Masayang-masaya po ako. Magandang pamasko na ito* (GM title) sa akin, (I'm very happy. This is already a beautiful Christmas gift for me," said So, who finished the nine-round Pichay Cup held at the Duty Free Fiesta Mall in Parañaque City with 6 points, a full point behind champion GM Ni Hua of China and half a point off Torre, Paragua and Singaporean GM Zhang Zhong.

The former Promil whiz kid, second of three children of accountants William and Eleanor So, obtained his first GM result in the Bad Wiesse Open in Germany in November 2006, but got stalled in his next international tournaments.

Dedicating at least four hours to chess study everyday, So expanded his game-repertoire and eventually clinched his second GM norm in the World Junior Chess Championships in Yerevan, Armenia, in September.

So, a high school sophomore of St. Francis of Assisi College System-Bacoor, also holds the distinction of being the country's youngest chess Olympian at 12 in Turin, Italy, in 2006, and youngest National Junior Open champion at 13 in May.

So is regarded as the world's strongest player in his age-group with an Elo rating of 2531, edging Indian GM Parimarjan Negi (born 1993, Elo 2514). His strength was amply proven when So won this year's World Under 16 Team Championship Board 1 gold medal in Singapore with a phenomenal score of 9.5 points out of a perfect 10.

"This is a dream come true for Wesley, said his mother Eleanor, comptroller of the De La Salle Health Sciences Institute in Dasmariñas, Cavite. "I'm very thankful his hard work and dedication has been rewarded."

So became the second player to earn his GM title since former Surigao del Sur Rep. Prospero Pichay took over the presidency of the National Chess Federation of the Philippines last year.

The 27-year-old Laylo clinched his GM title by landing seventh in the sixth Asian Individual Chess Championship held at the Cebu International Convention Center in Mandaue City in September.

Pichay lauded So's achievement.

"This is really a memorable year for local chess. We produced not only one but two GMs in a span of three months and we are confident we can have more GMs next year," said Pichay, who has already hosted five major international chess tournaments in his incumbency.

NCFP secretary general Tagaytay City Mayor Abraham "Bambol" Tolentino said So's achievement will encourage local chess players to devote more time to the game.

Those who earned their GM titles at an earlier age than So were Sergey Karjakin of Ukraine (12 years and seven months), Parimarjan Negi of India (13 years, three months and 22 days), Magnus Carlsen of Norway (13 years, three months and 27 days), Bu Xiangzhi of China (13 years, 10 months and 13 days), Teimour Radjabov of Azerbaijan (14 years and 14 days), and Ruslan Ponomariov of Ukraine (14 years, 17 days).

So, currently the country's second-ranked player with Torre, dislodged GM Etienne Bacrot of France, who got his GM title at 14 years and two months, at seventh spot.

By comparison, the great Bobby Fischer of the United States was 15 years, six months and one day when he become a GM in 1958.

The top-seeded Ni and Torre drew their match after 42 moves of the Larsen opening, as did Paragua and Zhang in only 10 moves of the Ruy Lopez.

Ni, who tied for first place with compatriot GM Li Chao in the second President Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo Cup last month, bagged the top prize of $5,000. Paragua, Zhong and Torre each pocketed $3,000.

Eight players, led by So and unheralded Deniel Causo, shared fifth to 12th places and received $1,062 each.

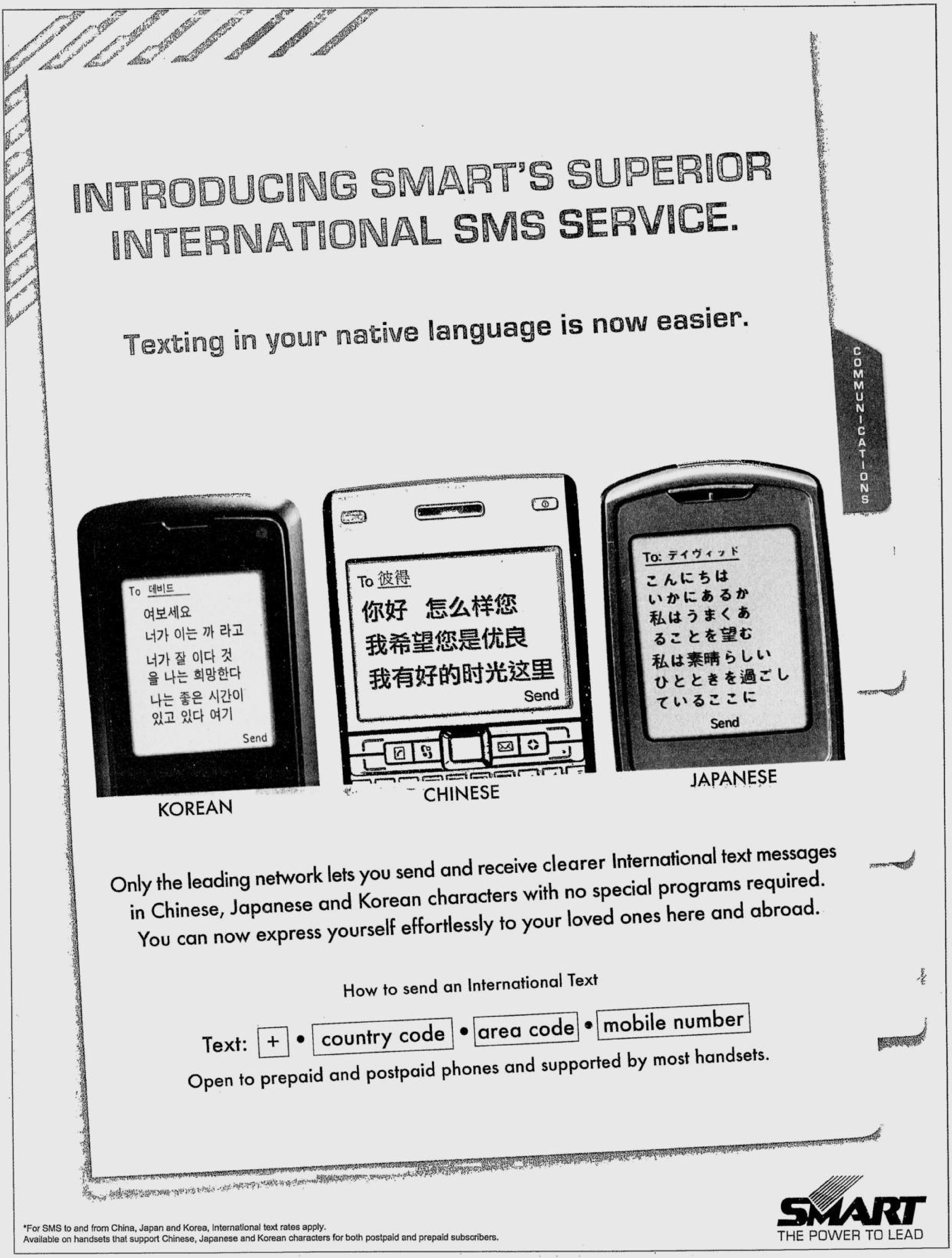
Bunched with them at six points were GM Rogelio Antonio Jr. and Fide Master Fernie Donguines, who split the point after 78 moves of the Torre Attack; and Li and IM Jayson Gonzales, who also halved the point.

Singapore-based Filipino IM Julio Catalino Sadorra also earned his first GM result after drawing with GM Dao Thien Hai of Vietnam and finishing with 5.5 points. Causo, on the other hand, clinched his first IM result after stunning Laylo.

Final standings:

7 points – H. Ni (China); 6.5 – M. Paragua (RP), Z. Zhong (Singapore), E. Torre (RP); 6 – W. So (RP), D. Causo (RP), C. Li (China), E. Maghami (Iran), F. Donguines (RP), R. Antonio (RP), J. Gonzales (RP), W. Zhou (China); 5.5 – J. Sadorra (RP), R. Bitoon (RP), D.T. Hai (Vietnam), N.A. Dung (Vietnam), J. Gomez (RP), E. Senador (RP), H. Nouri (RP), R. Dableo (RP), S. Severino (RP), C. Garma (RP), Y. Lie (China), R. Bancod (RP)

WESLEY SO: The future of Philippine chess lies in his brilliant mind. RYAN LIM



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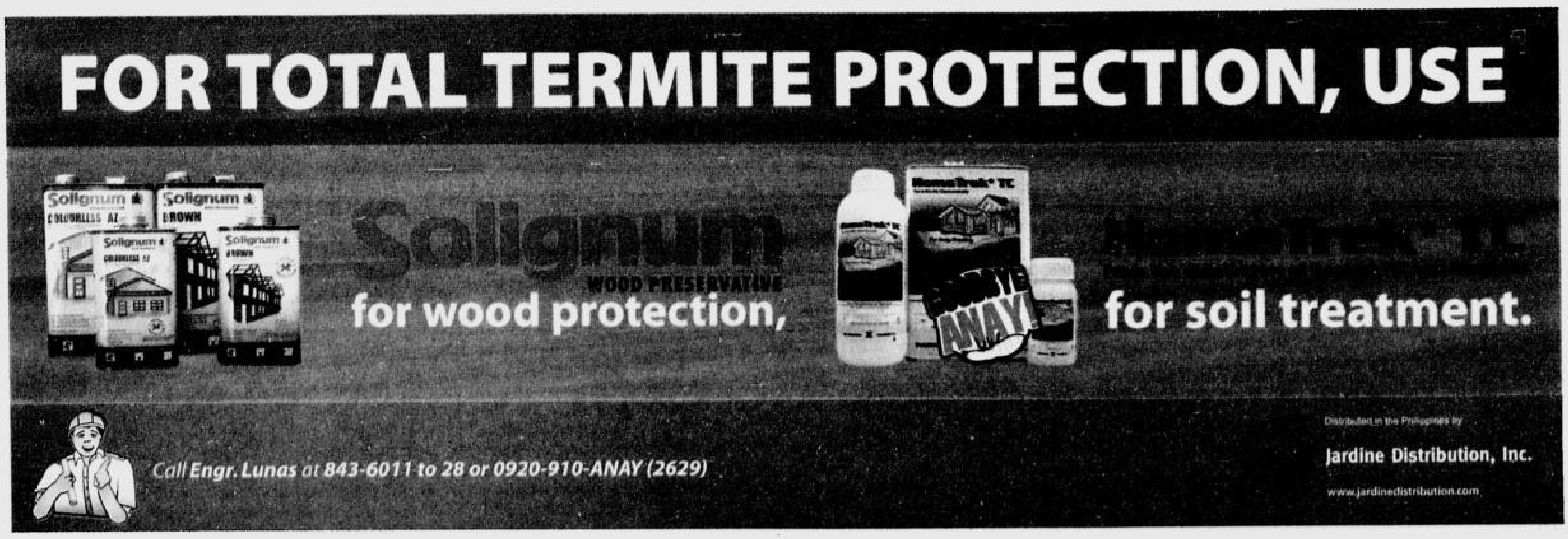

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NBI raids alleged cybersex den

Pasig company given license as call center

By Tina G. Santos

THE NATIONAL BUREAU OF INVESTIGATION raided Wednesday what was supposed to be a call center but which allegedly operated as a cybersex den in Pasig City.

Agents of the NBI Special Action Unit raided American Chat Link Inc. at 12th floor, Tycoon Center, Pearl Drive, Ortigas Center, Pasig City. The company has over 400 employees operating on four shifts.

The NBI said operators of the cybersex den could be charged with violation of Article 201 of the Revised Penal Code (Immoral doctrines, obscene publication, exhibition and indecent shows).

They seized 155 computers allegedly used in cyber pornography, 12 Internet hubs, several Internet servers and documents, including a list of over 200 adult sites allegedly used in the illegal operation.

The estimated value of the seized items was P3-P4 million.

Lawyer Angelito Magno, chief of the NBI-SAU, said the firm was engaged in online dating and selling, enhancing and creation of pornographic websites.

He said it was incorporated to operate, maintain and do business as a call center.

"But apparently (being a call center) was only a disguise for its real (business) of providing obscene and immoral pornographic materials for exhibition to foreign and local clients, most of whom were elderly men," the NBI official said. Payments to the firm were made through credit cards.

Cybersex den operators sell membership to an adult website.

Employees would set up profiles and chat online, pretending they were the ones on the profiles. Clients were charged a $5 subscription fee for 24-hour access, Magno said.

The NBI conducted the raid after month-long surveillance operations. It was armed with a search warrant from Pasig City Judge Rodolfo Bonifacio.

Magno said computer hard drives were now being examined by the NBI Anti-Fraud and Computer Crimes Division.

Fil-American Hardware Co., Inc.

YOU BETTER WATCH OUT!
A traffic enforcer dressed as Santa Claus directs traffic along McKinley Road inside Taguig City's The Fort.
EDWIN BACASMAS

Recycled lights for Muntinlupa's roads

By Julie M. Aurelio

RECYCLED STREETLIGHTS will soon lend a brighter glow to Muntinlupa City's side streets.

The city government recently announced that it would make use of old streetlights from the main thoroughfares to light up the city's secondary roads and alleys at night.

Mayor Aldrin San Pedro said well-lit primary and secondary streets means fewer road accidents involving motorists and pedestrians alike.

"What we did was to install streetlights to guide cars at night. This has resulted in a safe driving experience for everyone using Susana Heights," he added.

The 8-year-old streetlights along the National Road from Barangay Tunasan to Alabang will be replaced with modern lampposts. The old ones will not be discarded but transferred to secondary roads near the National Road.

New lampposts were also installed recently at the Susana Heights Road in Barangay Tunasan which links the city to San Pedro, Laguna and the Southern Luzon Expressway.

Electric bike patrol teams roam Pasig malls

By Kristine L. Alave

THE EASTERN POLICE DISTRICT (EPD) has deployed four electric bikes in Pasig City to help patrol crowded shopping centers and public spaces.

Two of the four three-wheeled electric bikes are used in the Metrowalk Shopping Center. The other two, EPD chief Senior Supt. Nilo dela Cruz said, would be used in other areas, as needed.

Dela Cruz said the EPD acquired the scooters last month.

"The scooters are very convenient for the police. It's faster, it gives them a higher vantage point. The police get to be taller by eight inches," Dela Cruz said.

Since the policemen would stand out in a crowd, the public can easily spot them, the EPD chief said. "This gives the public a sense of security," he added.

Dela Cruz said increased police visibility was in accordance with the Philippine National Police "Mamang Pulis" program that aimed to bring the police force closer to the people.

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Pasay City to build transport terminal

By Julie M. Aurelio

AN INTERMODAL TRANSPORT terminal in Pasay City is being planned to ease traffic in the Taft Avenue-Rotunda area.

The terminal is expected to help reduce the number of vehicles fighting for passengers and road space.

Having a new terminal would make commuting between Manila and Cavite province easier, Pasay officials said.

The Southwest Intermodal Terminal Center will be built near the Mall of Asia.

The proposal was raised during the first Pasay City Summit on Transport and Traffic Management held recently at the Heritage Hotel.

City public information officer Manny Aun said participants from local government offices and transport groups identified the city's top three traffic problems, including colorum (illegal) buses plying major thoroughfares and obstructions of side streets by pedicabs, tricycles and other vehicles.

Aun said colorum buses caused traffic in the Malibay and Taft Rotunda areas near the MRT and the LRT.

Pedicabs and tricycles, he said, parked on side streets, causing buildups in secondary roads.

Under the proposal, buses and jeepneys would stay in designated sections at the airconditioned terminal, and hopefully reduce the number of vehicles vying for passengers on the road.

The terminal is a joint project of the national government and the Pasay City government under Mayor Wenceslao Trinidad.

Arrogance of power goes down to the ranks

ON TARGET

Ramon Tulfo

THE ARROGANCE OF POWER shown by Interior Secretary Ronnie Puno, who said he would have media people arrested again if the Peninsula incident were repeated, has filtered down to the lower ranks in the police.

Quezon City Police District Supt. Franklin Moises Mabanag allegedly drove GMA-7 reporter Rawna Crisostomo out of his office with an M-16 rifle. Crisostomo was just following up an upduction story at the latter's office.

Mabanag, chief of the QCPD Criminal Investigation Unit, didn't care whether or not Crisostomo's camera crew was recording his ungentlemanly conduct.

This official is a member of Philippine Military Academy (PMA) Class of 1985 who is supposed to be "an officer and a gentleman."

Well, when the higher-ups are arrogant, what can you expect from people in the lower notches of the totem pole?

***

May the Court of Appeals justices, who affirmed a lower court's decision convicting of rape a complete paralytic, not be overtaken by karmic justice.

May their children or close relatives not suffer what quadriplegic Jeff Quesada is suffering right now because of their decision.

***Por Dios por santo*, those justices should have taken a glimpse of the wheelchair-bound Jeff before condemning him to a life in prison!**

***

The Bureau of Immigration has ruled that Saudi resident Fauzi Bondagjy is an undesirable alien.

The immigration bureau found that Bondagji has violated labor laws and is reportedly a threat to national security.

But he is not being deported reportedly because of pressure being exerted by the Saudi ambassador to the Philippines on Immigration Commissioner Nonoy Libanan and Executive Secretary Eduardo Ermita.

This is what our government is to Arab countries that supply the country much needed oil: a doormat.

***

Media outlets in Manila are raising a howl over the arrest and detention of their reporters in the Peninsula incident, but have forgotten the plight of Alexander "Lex" Adonis who is in jail after being convicted of libel.

"Now I know that you know how it feels to be jailed for no crime at all," said Adonis, a former radio commentator of Radyo Bombo in Davao City, in a letter sent to his colleagues in Manila.

Adonis was found guilty after he failed to attend hearings on the case filed against him by a political bigwig in the city. His coaccused were acquitted.

The former commentator drew the ire of the politician who he alleged, was seen running naked in a hotel in Manila.

The politician was reportedly running away from his girlfriend's husband who caught them in bed.

Lex, I know how it feels to be left alone by your colleagues in media when the chips are down.

Just hang in there, because help is on the way.

Some Manila lawyers have promised to take up the cudgels for you.

ENGINEERING LICENSURE TESTS

Board examinees offered two options

By Margaux C. Ortiz

THE CIVIL ENGINEERING Against Retake Students' Union, an association of graduates opposed to a new set of examinations to be given Jan. 12, has given close to 5,000 board examinees until next week to accept or deny the optional retake of the November licensure exams ordered by the Professional Regulation Commission (PRC).

Gregory Gabelo, head of the union's media and communications committee, said they are now gathering results of a consensus of examinees all throughout the country regarding the PRC decision. The deadline of the consensus is on Dec. 12, Gabelo said.

The PRC suggested an optional retake for the examinees on Jan. 12 during a closed-door meeting with school representatives and lawyers of the union on Thursday.

"The optional retake can be taken by the examinees while the investigation is still ongoing," Gabelo explained.

If an examinee passes the retake, the PRC would recognize the results, regardless of the result of the investigation.

"But if an examinee fails on the retake but passed the November 2007 board exams, the civil engineering graduate will still get a passing rate if the union's petition succeeds," Gabelo said.

On Nov. 26, the PRC announced that the test results in two of three subjects—Hydraulics and Geotechnical Engineering and Structural Engineering and Construction—would be nullified after two examinees were caught cheating in the two areas. The two were found to have used cell phones which contained answers to 30 questions, 21 of which turned out to be correct.

The PRC also said the "unusually high grades" the examinees obtained in the hydraulics subject were "statistically improbable."

However, the examinees emphasized in their petition that there was no evidence linking the high grades they obtained to the discovery of the use of the mobile phones.

Gabelo said that during the meeting, the PRC had attested that cheating took place at the Cagayan de Oro testing center. The incident is now undergoing investigation, the Commission's officials said.

"The PRC also confirmed during the meeting that there were no irregularities in the hydraulics subject, but pointed out that the unusual high grade was an irregularity in itself," Gabelo said.

The union official said that lawyer Jobert Pahilga, who represents the graduates, would file a motion to speed up the investigation and the PRC's decision on the issue.

Pasay's center by the bay to showcase Pinoy Christmas

By Tina G. Santos

A UNIQUE FILIPINO CHRISTMAS celebration will be presented Dec. 18-22 at the Cultural Center of the Philippines (CCP) Complex on Roxas Boulevard, Pasay City.

The CCP grounds beside Manila Bay will be filled with lights and sounds as the CPP and Manila Broadcasting Company mount a series of activities showcasing various Filipino Christmas traditions.

"Paskong Pinoy" will kick-off on Dec. 18, 5 a.m., with Simbang Gabi at the CCP front lawn.

A ceremonial lighting of Bauan lanterns, made of various indigenous materials by students of the Bauan National High School in Batangas, will follow at 2 p.m. at the CCP Little Theater.

"Sopas, Sining at Sorbetes (Food to Taste, Arts to Appreciate)," an annual feeding and arts appreciation program of the CCP, will be held for 1,200 underprivileged children from poor communities. Afterwards, the children will be treated to free tours and rides at nearby Star City.

According to Chris Millado, CCP associate artistic director, the production will incorporate the Filipino spirit of *bayanihan* and cultural diaspora. It will feature young showbiz personalities, together with the Ramon Obusan Folkloric Group's Vamos a Belen artists, the Angono Higantes, circus performers and ballet dancers. The "Panunuluyan," which will start at 6:30 p.m., will be capped by a performance of a 1,000-voice choir.

Other highlights of "Paskong Pinoy" include "Ilaw ng Pasko," a lantern-float competition among fine arts, engineering and architecture students of colleges, universities and technical institutes.

The champion team will receive P200,000 plus a trophy and other gifts courtesy of Star City, while second and third placers will receive P100,000 and P50,000, respectively.

"Himig ng Pasko," on the other hand, is a choral competition featuring children's chorale groups in the metropolis.

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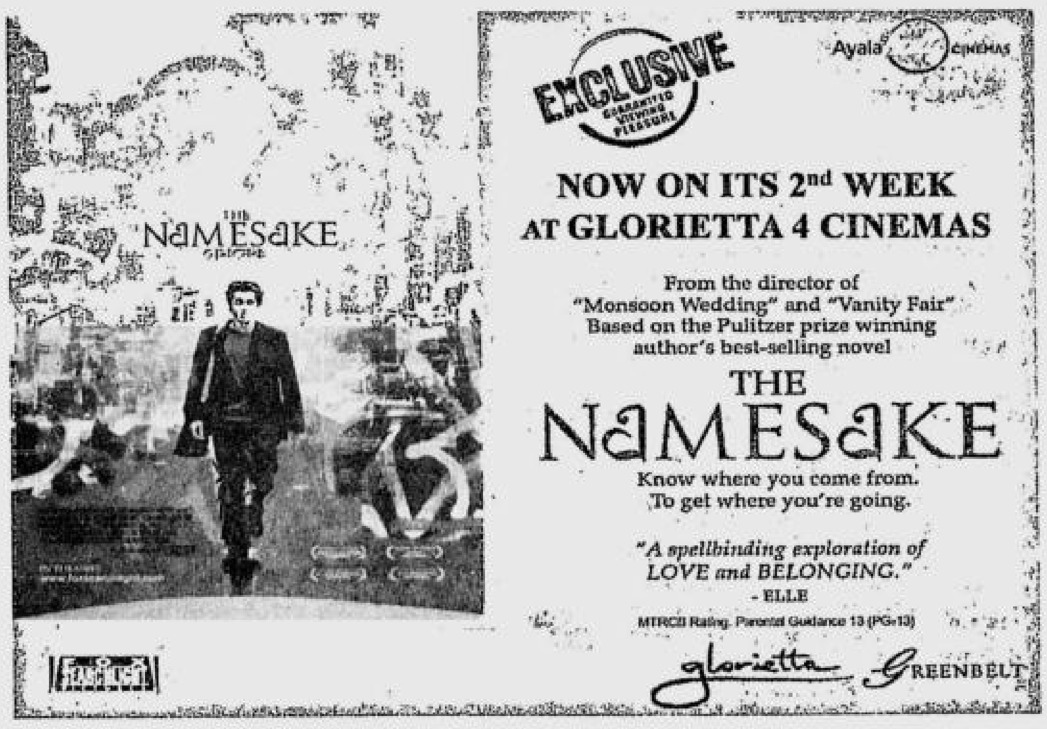
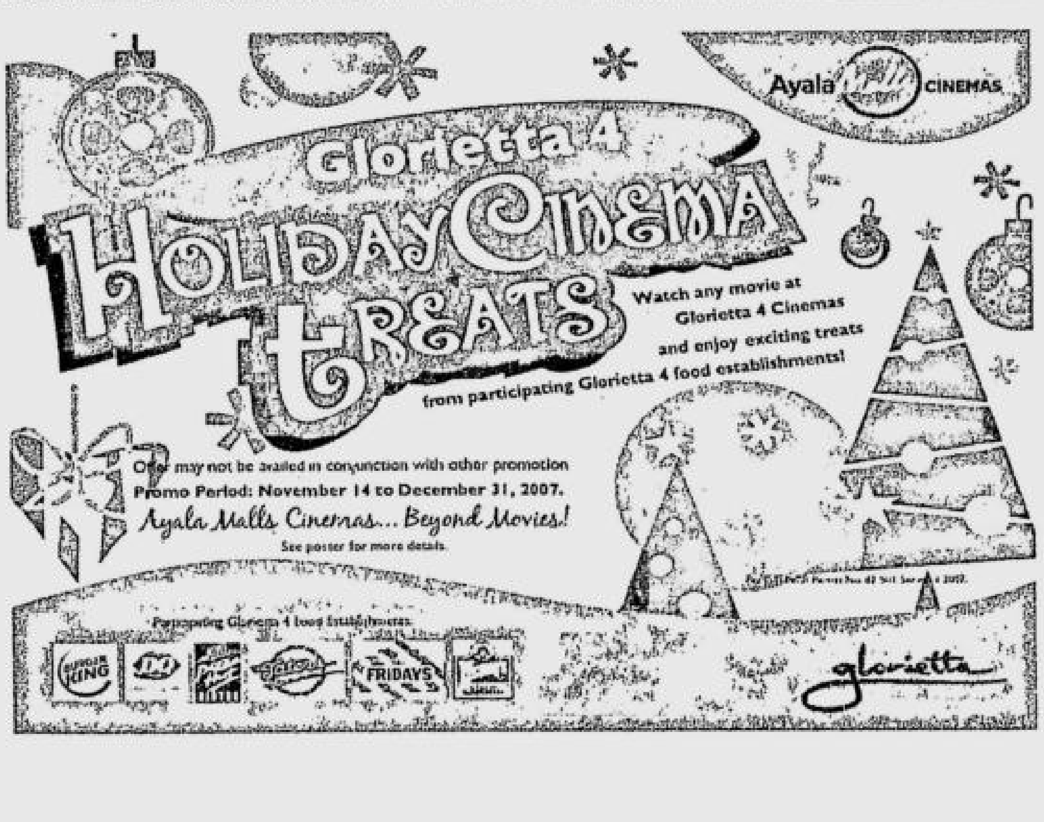
"ONE OF THE BEST FILMS OF 2007 A PITCH-PERFECT CRIME THRILLER." — Richard Roeper
CASEY AFFLECK MICHELLE MONAGHAN MORGAN FREEMAN ED HARRIS
GONE BABY GONE
EVERYONE WANTS THE TRUTH... UNTIL THEY FIND IT.
MTRCB Rating: Restricted 13 (R-13)
glorietta GREENBELT



EXCLUSIVE GUARANTEED VIEWING PLEASURE
Ayala Malls Cinemas
NOW ON ITS 2nd WEEK AT GLORIETTA 4 CINEMAS
From the director of "Monsoon Wedding" and "Vanity Fair" Based on the Pulitzer prize winning author's best-selling novel
THE NAMESAKE
Know where you come from. To get where you're going.
"A spellbinding exploration of LOVE and BELONGING." - ELLE
MTRCB Rating. Parental Guidance 13 (PG-13)
glorietta GREENBELT



Ayala Malls Cinemas
Glorietta 4 Holiday Cinema Treats
Watch any movie at Glorietta 4 Cinemas and enjoy exciting treats from participating Glorietta 4 food establishments!
Offer may not be availed in conjunction with other promotion
Promo Period: November 14 to December 31, 2007.
Ayala Malls Cinemas... Beyond Movies!
See poster for more details.
Participating Glorietta 4 food Establishments:
glorietta

REPUBLIC OF THE PHILIPPINES
DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE
LIVELIHOOD CORPORATION
7/F One Corporate Plaza Cond., 845 A. Arnaiz Ave., Legazpi Vill.,
Brgy. San Lorenzo, Makati City Tel. No. 817-0771

INVITATION TO BID

The Livelihood Corporation (LIVECOR) is offering for sale the properties described below:

OFFICE CONDOMINIUM (ENTIRE 7TH FLOOR)

	PROPERTY/LOCATION	AREA	DESCRIPTION	FLOOR PRICE
1	**ONE CORPORATE PLAZA** 7th/F, OCP, 845 A. Arnaiz Ave., Makati City	987.75 sq.m.	Condominium (Office Space ONLY, excluding furniture & fixtures)	44,449,000.00

INDUSTRIAL/ RESIDENTIAL LOTS:

1	**LAGUNA PROPERTY** Km. 71, Brgy. San Andres, Alaminos, Laguna	17,394 sq.m.	Industrial Land	8,007,600.00
2	**DAVAO PROPERTY** R. Castillo St., Brgy. Agdao, Davao City	3,696 sq.m.	Light Industrial Land	6,914,000.00
3	**BULACAN PROPERTY** Purok 4, Brgy. Santissima Trinidad, Malolos City, Bulacan	3,397 sq.m.	Residential Land	2,718,000.00
4	**BOHOL PROPERTY** Brgy. Dampas, Tagbilaran City, Bohol	551 sq.m.	Residential Lots (2 adjoining lots)	1,653,000.00
5	**CABANATUAN PROPERTY** Brgy. Kalikid Sur, (Cabu), Cabanatuan City	1,335 sq.m.	Residential Land	304,000.00
6	**BACOLOD PROPERTY** Pag-asa St. Extension, Brgy. Tangub, Bacolod	220 sq.m.	Residential Land	616,000.00
7	**PANGASINAN PROPERTY** Brgy. Buenlag, Binmaley, Pangasinan	1,506 sq.m.	Residential Land	1,092,000.00

Conditions:

1. Winning bidders shall assume responsibility of paying any and/or all taxes relative to the sale or transfer of the properties.
2. Bidders bond shall not be less than 1% of the floor price.
3. Bidding documents can be secured upon payment of a non-refundable fee of P1,000.00 at the following address:

   BIDS and AWARDS COMMITTEE
   The Livelihood Corporation (LIVECOR)
   7th Floor One Corporate Plaza,
   845 A. Arnaiz Avenue, Makati City.

4. Pre-Bid Conference will be on December 19, 2007, Wednesday at 10:00 AM, Conference Room, The Livelihood Corporation, 7th Floor One Corporate Plaza, 845 A. Arnaiz Avenue, Makati City.
5. The sealed bids should be dropped at the designated drop box located at the security desk of the Livelihood Corporation, 7th Floor One Corporate Plaza, 845 A. Arnaiz Avenue, Makati City on or before 10:00 AM on Friday, January 18, 2008.
6. All bidders are enjoined to inspect the property/ies before submitting their bids.

For more details, please contact Luz C. Jacinto, BAC Secretariat at tel. no. (02) 817-07-71 or 817-04-64 and Cell No. 0918-6078530 or Felix Samson, Officer-in-Charge, EDMD at tel. no. 531-3324 and cell no. 0928-3038068.

THE CORPORATION RESERVES THE RIGHT TO REJECT ANY OR ALL OFFERS AND TO WAIVE ANY DEFECTS OR TO ACCEPT SUCH OFFERS AS MAY BE CONSIDERED ADVANTAGEOUS TO THE CORPORATION.

For the Bids and Awards Committee:
(Sgd.) **E. ALEXIS G. SEVIDAL, CESO IV**
Chairman

(PDI--Dec. 8, 9 & 10, 2007)

CIA destroyed 2 tapes showing interrogations

WASHINGTON—THE CENTRAL Intelligence Agency in 2005 destroyed at least two videotapes documenting the interrogation of two Qaida operatives in the agency's custody, a step it took in the midst of congressional and legal scrutiny about its secret detention program, according to current and former government officials.

The videotapes showed agency operatives in 2002 subjecting terrorism suspects—including Abu Zubaydah, the first detainee in CIA custody—to severe interrogation techniques. They were destroyed in part because officers were concerned that tapes showing harsh interrogation methods could expose agency officials to risk of legal jeopardy, several officials said.

In a statement to employees on Thursday, Gen. Michael V. Hayden, the CIA director, said that the decision to destroy the tapes was made "within the CIA" and that the reason was to protect the safety of undercover officers and because the tapes no longer had intelligence value.

The destruction of the tapes raises questions about whether agency officials withheld information from the courts and from the Sept. 11 commission about aspects of the program.

The recordings were not provided to a federal court hearing the case of the terror suspect Zacarias Moussaoui or to the Sept. 11 commission, which had made formal requests to the CIA for transcripts and other documentary evidence taken from interrogations.

The disclosures about the tapes are likely to reignite the debate over laws that allow the CIA to use interrogation practices more severe than those allowed to other agencies.

Hayden said that the agency had acted "in line with the law" and said he was informing CIA employees "because the press has learned" about the matter.

Hayden's statement said that the tapes posed a "serious security risk" and that if they had become public they would have exposed CIA officials "and their families to retaliation from al-Qaida and its sympathizers."

It was not clear who authorized the destruction of the tapes, but current and former government officials said the action was approved by officials within the CIA's clandestine service.

In both 2003 and 2005, CIA lawyers told prosecutors in the Moussaoui case that the CIA did not possess recordings of interrogations sought by the judge.

Paul Gimigliano, a CIA spokesperson, said that the court had sought tapes of "specific, named terrorists whose comments might have a bearing on the Moussaoui case" and that the videotapes destroyed were not of those individuals. *NYT*

WORLDBRIEFS

'Dear Mr. Chairman': Bush writes to Kim

WASHINGTON—President Bush, directly engaging the man he publicly called a "tyrant," wrote a letter to North Korea's leader, Kim Jong-il, in which he held out the prospect of normalized relations with the United States if North Korea fully discloses its nuclear programs and dismantles its nuclear reactor, administration officials said Thursday. The high-level personal missive from Bush to the leader of the country he placed in his "axis of evil" in 2002 was sent as US negotiators are struggling to get the secretive North Korean government to fully explain and disclose the extent, use and spread of its nuclear material and technology. At the same time, the United States is also urging other nations to maintain pressure on Iran in the wake of a new assessment that Tehran halted nuclear weapons work in 2003. Bush began with the salutation "Dear Mr. Chairman," and urged the enigmatic North Korean leader to reveal all of his country's past and present nuclear work. "I want to emphasize that the declaration must be complete and accurate if we are to continue our progress," the letter said, according to a senior administration official. *NYT*

Parcel bomb explodes in Paris legal office

PARIS—Baffled police were Friday looking for motives after a parcel bomb exploded at a legal office in central Paris killing a secretary and seriously injuring a lawyer in an attack condemned by French Prime Minister Francois Fillon as barbaric. Several other people were lightly hurt in Thursday's unclaimed blast on the fourth floor of a building in the capital's fashionable eighth arrondissement or district. *AFP*

2.38M people in US state, federal jails

ABOUT one in every 31 adults in the United States was in prison, in jail or on supervised release at the end of last year, the Department of Justice reported Wednesday. An estimated 2.38 million people were incarcerated in state and federal facilities, an increase of 2.8 percent over 2005, while a record 5 million people were on parole or probation, an increase of 1.8 percent. Immigration detention facilities had the greatest growth rate last year. The number of people held in Immigration and Customs Enforcement detention facilities grew 43 percent, to 14,482 from 10,104. The data reflect deep racial disparities in the nation's correctional institutions, with a record 905,600 black inmates in prisons and state and local jails. In several states, incarceration rates for blacks were more than 10 times the rate of whites. In Iowa, for example, blacks were imprisoned at 13.6 times the rate of whites, according to an analysis of the data by the Sentencing Project, a research and advocacy group. *NYT*

THE YEAR IN PICTURES Alexander Pichushkin sits behind the glass in a Moscow court Oct. 29 in one of RNPS' pictures of the year. A judge handed out a life in prison sentence to Russia's "chessboard murderer" who was convicted of killing 48 people. REUTERS

105 dead after blast in China mining region

SHANGHAI, CHINA—A GAS explosion at a coal mine in northern China late Wednesday killed at least 105 people in one of the country's worst mining accidents this year, the official Xinhua news agency said Friday.

The explosion occurred in the city of Linfen, about 240 miles south of Taiyuan, the capital of Shanxi province, in a huge coal-producing region. The official media reports said at least 15 other miners had been rescued or had escaped on their own. It was unclear how many people had been working in the mine at the time of the accident.

Many of the rescued miners were hospitalized after the explosion, which took place at a mine operated by the Ruizhiyuan Mining Co.

Xinhua reported that the blast occurred at 11:15 p.m. Wednesday, but that the local authorities were not told until 5 a.m. on Thursday. The death toll climbed during the day and reached 105 Friday after 26 bodies were recovered overnight.

The government said two mine officials, including the head of the mine, were being held by the police. Xinhua also reported that the accident may have been caused by illegal activity in an unauthorized area of the mine.

Coal mining accidents are a common occurrence in China, where on average more than 5,000 miners lose their lives every year, the worst accident rate in the world. Nearly every week, there are news reports of mining blasts, deaths, rescue efforts and teams of miners trapped in horrific circumstances. By comparison, there are typically about 30 mining deaths a year in the United States. *NYT*

TransCo
National Transmission Corporation

December 8, 2007

INVITATION TO APPLY FOR ELIGIBILITY AND TO BID

Republic of the Philippines

Supply, Delivery, Installation, Test and Commissioning of One (1) Unit Gyro Stabilized UV/Video/Thermal Imaging Powerline Inspection System
(ATO-07-45531)

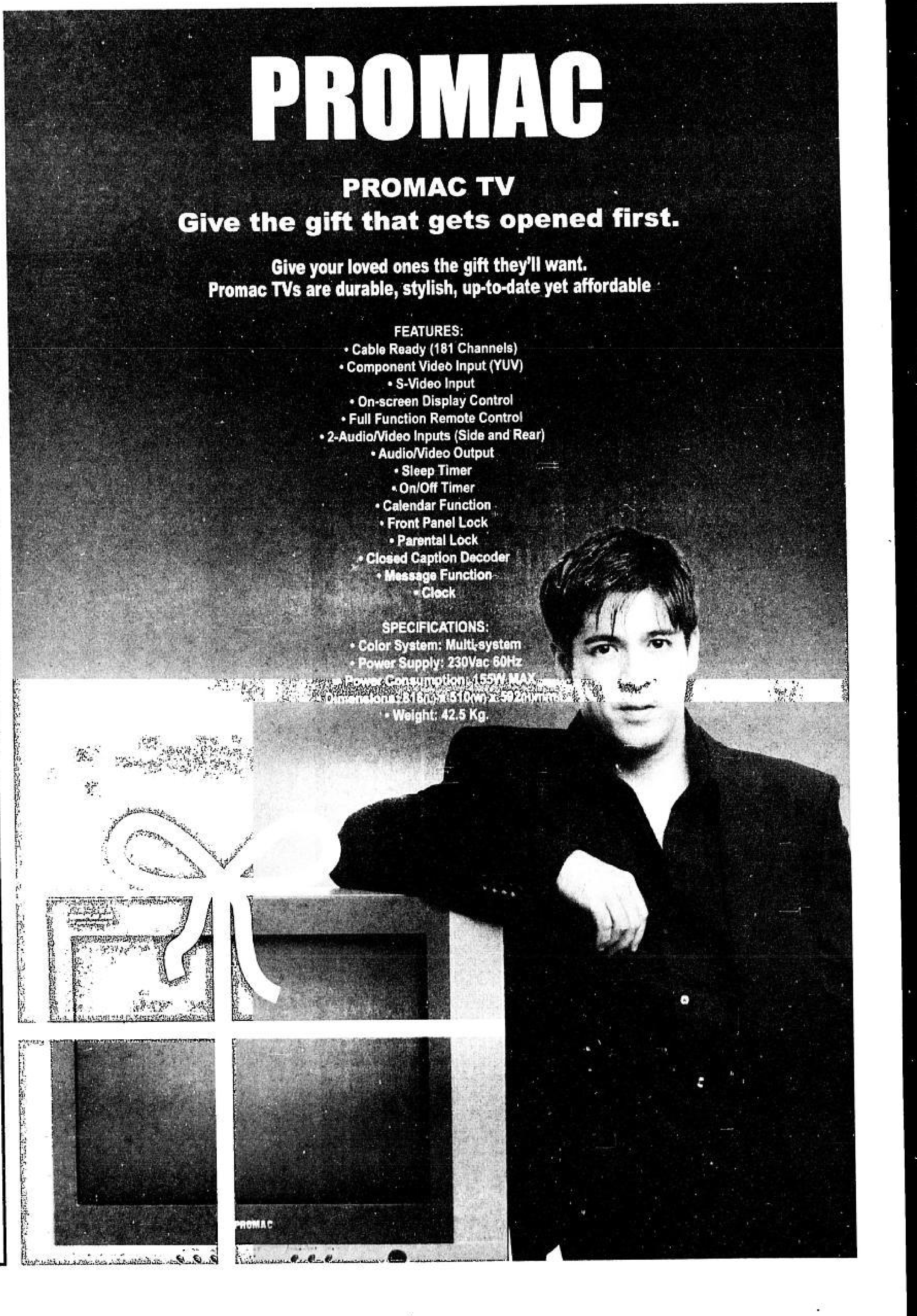
1. The **National Transmission Corporation (TransCo)** through the Annual Corporate Budget of 2007 intends to apply the sum of **PHILIPPINE PESOS FORTY FIVE MILLION PESOS (PhP 45,000,000.00)** being the Approved Budget for the Contract (ABC) to payment under the contract for the Supply, Delivery, Installation, Test and Commissioning of One (1) Unit Gyro Stabilized UV/Video/Thermal Imaging Powerline Inspection System. **Bids received in excess of the ABC shall be automatically rejected.**
2. **TransCo** now invites Bids from eligible Bidders for the **Supply, Delivery, Installation, Test and Commissioning of One (1) Unit Gyro Stabilized UV/Video/Thermal Imaging Powerline Inspection System**. The duration of the contract is **Two Hundred Ten (210) Calendar Days.** The description of an eligible Bidder is contained in Section II of the Bidding Documents, ITB.

   Prospective bidders should have experience in undertaking a similar contract within the last fifteen (15) years with an amount of at least 50% of the proposed contract for bidding. The Eligibility Check/Screening as well as the Preliminary Examination of Bids shall use non-discretionary "pass/fail" criteria. Post-qualification of the lowest calculated bid shall be conducted.
3. Bidding will be conducted through open competitive bidding procedures using non-discretionary pass/fail criteria as specified in the Implementing Rules and Regulations Part A (IRR-A) of Republic Act 9184 (R.A. 9184), otherwise known as the "Government Procurement Reform Act," and is restricted to Filipino citizens/sole proprietorships, organizations with at least sixty percent (60%) interest or outstanding capital stock belonging to citizens of the Philippines, and to citizens or organizations of a country the laws or regulations of which grant similar rights or privileges to Filipino citizens, pursuant to Republic Act 5183 (R.A. 5183) and subject to Commonwealth Act 138 (C.A. 138). Only Bids from Bidders who pass the eligibility check will be opened. The process for the eligibility check is described in Section II of the Bidding Documents, ITB. The bidder with the Lowest Calculated Bid (LCB) shall advance to the post-qualification stage in order to finally determine responsiveness of the bid to technical and financial requirements of the project. The contract shall then be awarded to the Lowest Calculated and Responsive Bidder (LCRB) who was determined as such during the post-qualification procedure.
4. Interested Bidders may obtain further information from **TransCo** and inspect the Bidding Documents at the address given below from **8:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m.**, during working days starting **December 22, 2007**.
5. A complete set of Bidding Documents may be purchased by interested Bidders from the address below and upon payment of a non-refundable fee in the amount of **PHP 5,000.00**. The method of payment will be **on cash basis only**. The Bidding Documents shall be received personally by the prospective Bidder or his authorized representative.
6. **TransCo** will hold a **Pre-Bid Conference** open to all interested parties on **January 9, 2008 at 9:00 a.m.** at the Training Center Building, National Transmission Corporation, Power Center, Quezon Avenue corner Agham Road, Diliman, Quezon City, Philippines.
7. Bids and eligibility requirements must be delivered to the address below on or before the date and time specified in item 8 below. All Bids must be accompanied by a Bid security in the form and in the amount specified in Clause 22, Section III, Bid Data Sheet of the Bidding documents or an equivalent amount in a freely convertible currency. **Late Bids shall not be accepted.**
8. **Bid Opening** shall be on **January 22, 2008 at 9:00 a.m.** at the Training Center Building, National Transmission Corporation, Power Center, Quezon Avenue corner Agham Road, Diliman, Quezon City, Philippines.
9. Bids will be opened in the presence of the Bidders' representatives who choose to attend at the said address.
10. The bidding is also open to foreign bidders with eligibility requirements described in Clause 3 above and in the Bidding Documents.
8. **TransCo** reserves the right to accept or reject any Bid, to annul the bidding process, and to reject all Bids at any time prior to contract award, without thereby incurring any liability to the affected Bidder or Bidders.

Mr. R. D. NABONG
Manager, Bids & Contracts Management Department
Ground Floor, Power Center
National Transmission Corporation
Quezon Avenue Corner B.I.R. Road
1104 Diliman, Quezon City, Philippines
Tel. No. (632) 981-2212; 981-2213; 921-2308
Fax No. (632) 921-2308
Website: http://www.transco.ph

(Sgd.) Atty. NOEL Z. DE LEON
Chairman, Bids & Awards Committee

(PDI - Dec. 8 & 22, 2007)



PROMAC

PROMAC TV
Give the gift that gets opened first.

Give your loved ones the gift they'll want.
Promac TVs are durable, stylish, up-to-date yet affordable

FEATURES:
- Cable Ready (181 Channels)
- Component Video Input (YUV)
- S-Video Input
- On-screen Display Control
- Full Function Remote Control
- 2-Audio/Video Inputs (Side and Rear)
- Audio/Video Output
- Sleep Timer
- On/Off Timer
- Calendar Function
- Front Panel Lock
- Parental Lock
- Closed Caption Decoder
- Message Function
- Clock

SPECIFICATIONS:
- Color System: Multi-system
- Power Supply: 230Vac 60Hz
- Power Consumption: 155W MAX
- Dimensions : 816(L) x 510(W) x 592(H)mm
- Weight: 42.5 Kg.

The WORLD

Editor **Luverne B. Gueco**

Bush under fire over dire Iran claims

WASHINGTON—THE WHITE HOUSE THURSday struggled to defend the dire warnings about Iran made by US President George W. Bush even after he had learned that Tehran had likely frozen its atomic weapons program in 2003.

A new US National Intelligence Estimate (NIE) released on Monday formally endorsed that conclusion, which Bush had first heard about in August from US Director of National Intelligence Michael McConnell.

On Aug. 28, Bush warned of a "nuclear holocaust" if the Islamic republic developed nuclear weapons, and on Oct. 17 he warned that anyone interested in avoiding "World War III" should support US pressure on Tehran.

On Oct. 21, US Vice President Dick Cheney warned Iran to suspend uranium enrichment or face "serious consequences"—the very language in the UN resolution on Iraq that the White House says justified the March 2003 invasion.

On Tuesday, the US president defended himself from Democratic charges of exaggerating the threat by saying that he had only been briefed on the NIE on Nov. 28 and suggesting that McConnell's earlier warning had been vague.

"In August, I think it was, Mike McConnell came in and said, 'we have some new information.' He didn't tell me what the information was. He did tell me it was going to take a while to analyze," Bush told a press conference.

But White House spokesperson Dana Perino said one day later that McConnell had told Bush that he was looking into information that Tehran had frozen its atomic weapons quest, casting doubt on previous US charges.

McConnell "said that if the new information turns out to be true, what we thought we knew for sure is right. Iran does in fact have a covert nuclear weapons program, but it may be suspended," the spokesperson said.

Confronted with the apparent contradiction between her comments and Bush's own words, Perino replied: "The president could have been more precise in that language. But the president was being truthful."

But some of Bush's Democratic critics, including candidates to succeed him in the November 2008 election, charged that Bush knew or should have known in August about the blockbuster finding that upended years of US rhetoric on Iran.

"Are you telling me a president who's briefed every single morning, who's fixated on Iran, is not told back in August that the tentative conclusion of 16 intelligence agencies in the United States government said they had abandoned their effort for a nuclear weapon in '03?" asked Sen. Joseph Biden. *AFP*

Police baffled why teen went on shooting rampage

OMAHA, NEBRASKA—AUthorities Thursday searched for clues as to why a teenager armed with an assault rifle randomly opened fire on Christmas shoppers in a mall, killing at least eight before turning the gun on himself.

"It appears random and the duration of this event only lasted a few minutes," said Omaha police chief Thomas Warren.

Robert Hawkins, 19, left a suicide note saying he wanted to be "famous" and a surreal scene of carnage which is becoming familiar.

"The victims and their loved ones are in the prayers of Americans," President George W. Bush said Thursday.

"Our whole nation grieves with the people of Omaha." The carefree strains of holiday music were suddenly smothered by the sounds of rapid gunfire and screams Wednesday as Hawkins turned his gun on a group of shoppers and store employees on the third floor of an open department store, witnesses said.

And as terrified people hid behind clothing racks and ran for their lives, the youth dressed in a camouflage vest and carrying a black backpack leaned over a railing and shot at people on the escalator and floor below.

UNDATED photo of Angie Schuster, 36, among those killed in the Dec. 5 carnage. AP

He managed to kill eight of the 13 people he shot with an AK-47 assault rifle, which he had stolen from his estranged stepfather.

A troubling portrait emerged Thursday of the disturbed youth who had been a ward of the state and spent time in substance abuse and mental health counseling after he was arrested as a teen.

The high school dropout who had recently broken up with his girlfriend and been arrested for underage drinking on Friday, cracked after he was fired from his job at McDonald's after being accused of stealing $17.

About an hour before the rampage began, Hawkins called the family who had taken him in after a brief stint on the streets.

He was upset about losing his job, said the woman who took the tall, bespectacled young man into her home in August 2006.

"I told him, 'Well just come on home, we'll talk about it—it's just not that big of a deal,'" Debora Maruca Kovac told CBS News. "He said it was too late."

Hawkins said he had been a burden to all his friends and family and didn't want to be one anymore. He thanked Kovac for everything her family had done for him and told her that he had left them a note.

"It said how much he loved his family and all his friends and how he was sorry he was a burden to everybody," she said. It also said that "his whole life he was a piece of shit and now he'll be famous."

While he was obviously depressed, Hawkins had shown no previous signs of violence, she added.

"He came to us like a little lost puppy. Scared and lonely. He wasn't a violent person," she said.

"He was always very sensitive and caring, always wanting to know how everybody was doing."

Most of the people who were mowed down when Hawkins started shooting were believed to be store employees rather than shoppers, US media reported.

Renee Toney was working in the gift wrap area near where Hawkins began shooting. A supervisor shouted at people to go into the nearby stockroom and Toney and the others rushed to it.

"None of them made it out," Toney said. "I was up front, and everybody except me was shot. It's a blur. I don't even know how I got to the stockroom. I was the closest one to the stockroom. Within seconds, they were shot right behind me."

The Nebraska incident was the latest in a series of shootings in the United States, which is home to more than 200 million privately owned firearms for a population of just over 300 million, authorities say.

In February, an 18-year-old Bosnian refugee shot and killed five people in a Utah shopping mall before being gunned down by police.

There have also been a series of school shootings this year, the worst being the Virginia Tech massacre in April, when 32 people were killed by a student who went on a campus rampage. *AFP*

China halts 'Maling' exports

SHANGHAI, CHINA—One of China's best-known food processors halted luncheon meat exports Friday on reports of chemical contamination, while the government announced the closure of more than 1,000 slaughterhouses over poor sanitation.

Those steps come amid a campaign to uncover potentially unsafe foods and other products and tighten government supervision over production. Those came after Chinese exports of products such as pet food ingredients and toothpaste were found to be contaminated with dangerous chemicals this year.

In a statement, Shanghai-based Maling Food Co. said it had sent top executives to Hong Kong to help investigate allegations a shipment of its meat was contaminated with the antibiotic nitrofurans, which is thought to cause cancer.

The export suspension was extended to all of Maling's canned food products, which include meat, seafood, fruits and vegetables, the company said.

Begun more than 75 years ago, Maling is one of China's most famous brands and its luncheon meat is as well known to Chinese consumers as Spam is in the United States. *AP*

Republic of the Philippines
DEPARTMENT OF LABOR AND EMPLOYMENT
National Capital Region
DY Int'l Bldg., 1650 San Marcelino
cor. General Malvar St., Malate, Manila

NOTICE OF FILING OF APPLICATION/S FOR ALIEN EMPLOYMENT PERMIT/S (AEP/S)

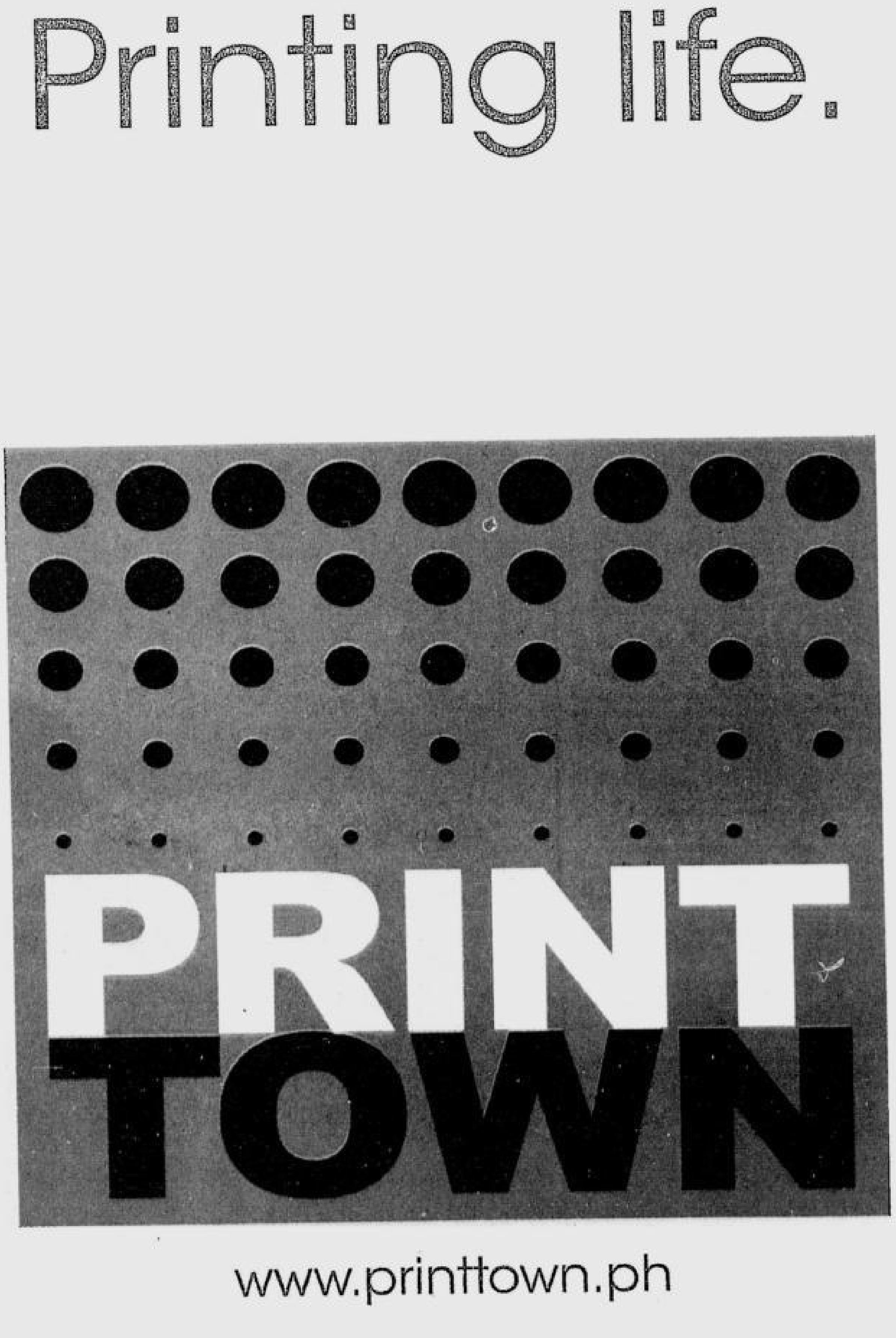
Notice is hereby given that the following companies/employers have filed with this Regional Office application/s for Alien Employment Permit/s:

Name and address of Company/Employer	Name of Foreign National/Citizenship	Position
ACCESS WORLDWIDE (AWWC) PHILIPPINES, INC. 18/F Yuchengco Tower, RCBC Plaza, 6819 Ayala Ave., Makati City	Janis Imants Valens American	Senior Manager
MMSPHIL MARITIME SERVICES, INC. Unit 102/203 Marbella II Bldg., 2071 Roxas Blvd., Malate, Manila	Mikio Kutsuwada Japanese	Training Consultant
CONNECTIVITY FACTORS AND ACCESS, INC. Basement 1, Export Bank Plaza, Chino Roces Ave., Makati City	Kyu Hwan Na Korean	Sales Asst. Manager
CONNECTIVITY FACTORS AND ACCESS, INC. Basement 1, Export Bank Plaza, Chino Roces Ave., Makati City	Heungrae Jo Korean	Asst. Manager
CONNECTIVITY FACTORS AND ACCESS, INC. Basement 1, Export Bank Plaza, Chino Roces Ave., Makati City	Hyukmin Kwon Korean	Asst. Supervisor
CONNECTIVITY FACTORS AND ACCESS, INC. Basement 1, Export Bank Plaza, Chino Roces Ave., Makati City	Chul Ho Lee Korean	Manager
CONNECTIVITY FACTORS AND ACCESS, INC. Basement 1, Export Bank Plaza, Chino Roces Ave., Makati City	Seakoo Kang Korean	Sales & Marketing Supervisor
JAIMAALAKSHMI LENDING & TRADING CORP. U-112-3A Balagtas Villas, Balagtas St., Pasay City	Sukhdev Singh Indian	Assistant Manager
JAIMAALAKSHMI LENDING & TRADING CORP. U-112-3A Balagtas Villas, Balagtas St., Pasay City	Amarjit Kaur Indian	Branch Manager
JAIMAALAKSHMI LENDING & TRADING CORP. U-112-3A Balagtas Villas, Balagtas St., Pasay City	Sukhvinder Kaur Indian	Bookkeeper
JAIMAALAKSHMI LENDING & TRADING CORP. U-112-3A Balagtas Villas, Balagtas St., Pasay City	Ramandeep Kaur Indian	Technical Supervisor
CLAULED TRADING LTD. CO. 927 Bernardo St., Binondo, Manila	Yinglie Xu Chinese	Supervisor
CLAULED TRADING LTD. CO. 927 Bernardo St., Binondo, Manila	Haifeng Huang Chinese	Supervisor
CLAULED TRADING LTD. CO. 927 Bernardo St., Binondo, Manila	Xiuhua Wu Chinese	Manager
WISEMEN TRAVEL & TOURS CONSULTANCY 1234 Bambang St. cor. Jose Abad Santos Sts., Tondo, Manila	Zongji Lin Chinese	Assistant Tour Manager
WISEMEN TRAVEL & TOURS CONSULTANCY 1234 Bambang St. cor. Jose Abad Santos Sts., Tondo, Manila	Pengfei Li Chinese	Tour Manager
WELS ACADEMY INC. U-202-203 The Taipan Place Bldg., Emerald Ave., Pasig City	James Ham Canadian	Tutor Training Consultant
PARAGON INTERNATIONAL CUSTOMER CARE LIMITED 14/F Yuchengco Tower, RCBC Plaza, Sen. Gil Puyat Ave. cor. Ayala Ave., Makati City	Yann Prunier French	Foreign Language Risk Management Representative
WSP ASIA PHILIPPINES, INC. 30/F One San Miguel Bldg., San Miguel Ave., Pasig City	Michael Charles Pratt British	M & E Division Manager
ICT MARKETING SERVICES, INC. 9/F PBCom Tower, Ayala Ave., Makati City	Anthony Carl Clarke American	Vice President for Training and Development
CITIBANK, N.A. Citibank Center, 8741 Valero St. cor. Villar St., Bel-Air Village, Makati City	Jane Valerie Hughes British	Sr. Vice President

If you have any information/objection to the above mentioned application/s please communicate with the Regional Director.

RAYMUNDO G. AGRAVANTE
OIC, Regional Director

(PDI – Dec. 8, 2007)



SPORTS
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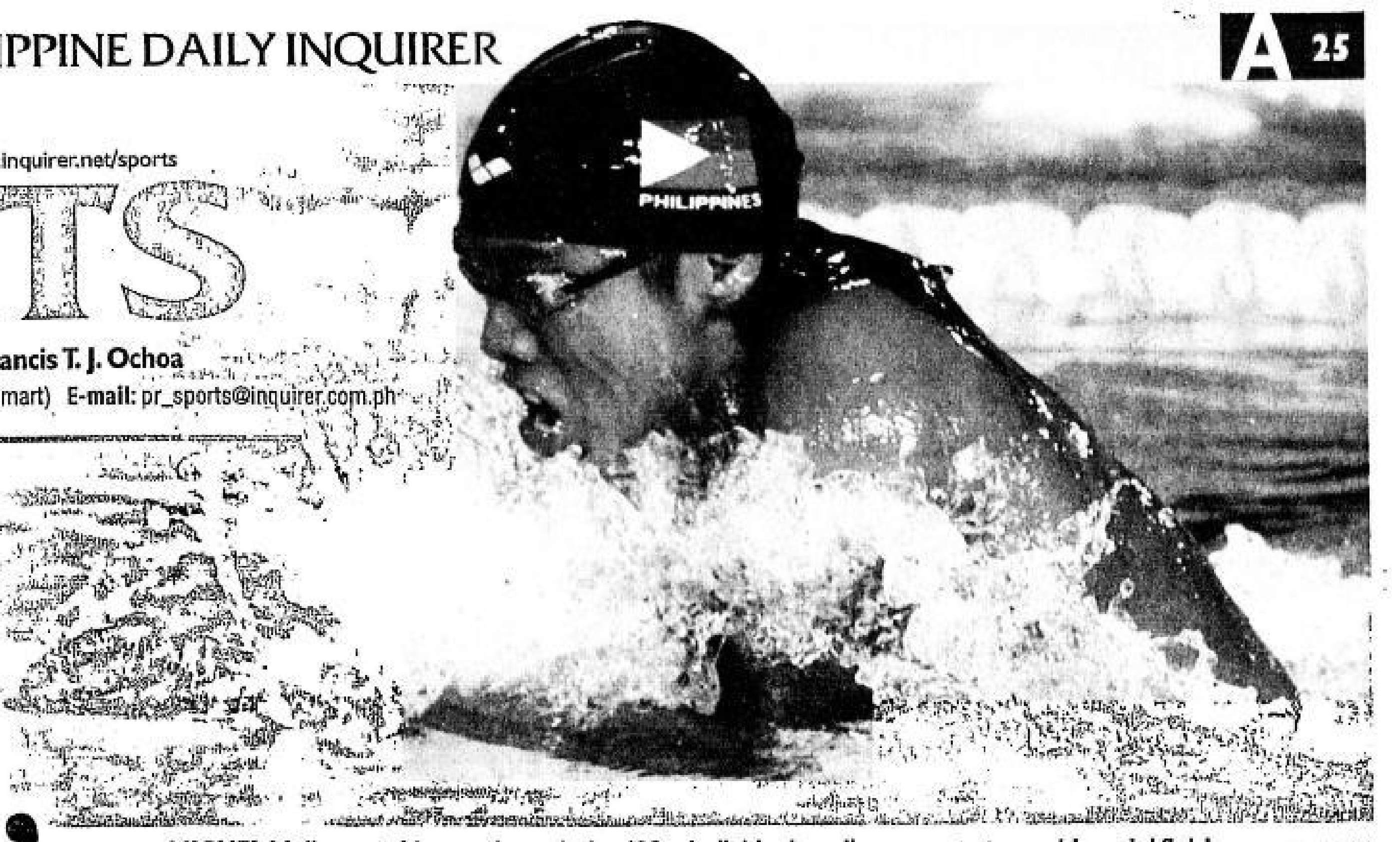

MIGUEL Molina cuts his way through the 400m individual medley en route to a gold-medal finish. RAFFY LERMA

RP tankers make waves, strike golds

Mountain bike bets seize 2 silvers / A26

By Ernesto A. Gonzales
Sports Features Editor

NAKHON RATCHASIMA—SWIMMER RYAN ARABEJO DELIVered a golden performance in the pool and the illustrious Miguel Molina struck for his sixth victory to stop the deluge of runner-up finishes by Filipinos as the 24th Southeast Asian Games started in earnest here Friday.

Nestle MILO
The Official Energy Drink of the Philippine Team
24th SEA GAMES 6-15 DECEMBER 2007 NAKHON RATCHASIMA THAILAND

SEA GAMES Medal Tally

COUNTRY	G	S	B				
Thailand	31	30	15	Myanmar	2	4	2
Vietnam	14	6	20	Laos	2	0	0
Singapore	11	9	10	Indonesia	1	5	7
Malaysia	5	5	9	Cambodia	0	0	2
Philippines	3	8	9	Brunei	0	0	0
				Timor Leste	0	0	0

The 18-year-old Arabejo, a budding homegrown star in a team studded with US-based swim talents, secured the country's second gold medal by ruling the men's 200-meter backstroke as night fell at the Aquatics Center with a time of two minutes 05.82 seconds.

Molina, who has collected five golds in the last two SEAG, followed suit. The 23-year-old swimmer flashed a big fighting heart as he turned back Indonesia's Muhamad Nasution by a touch in the men's 400-meter individual medley.

Molina, a swim scholar at the University of California in Berkeley, timed 4:28.85 against Nasution's 4:28.91. Singapore's Cong Zhi Lim was a far third at 4:40.42.

An Olympic qualifier in the 1,500 freestyle, Arabejo showed tremendous promise in his second SEAG as a multi-event swimmer by whipping two Singaporeans impressively.

He reduced Zach Ong into a well-beaten runner-up in 2:08.17 while Marcus Cheah settled for the bronze in 2:09.32.

Arabejo's victory ended a string of silver medals by the Filipinos, who earlier in the day felt the whip of Thailand's determined bid to succeed them as overall champion to highlight the country's celebration of King Bhumibol Adulyadej's 80th birthday.

Mountain biker Eusebio Quiñones, the cross country champion in 2003, failed to come up with a great follow-up to Joey Barba's nervy victory in the men's downhill run Thursday and the athletics squad couldn't break through the dominance of host Thailand.

Like Quiñones, Julius Sermona, Mary Grace Milgar and Rosie Villarito settled for the silver behind their respective Thai rivals, who topped five of the day's eight final events at the Main Stadium.

Another silver came from wrestler Marcus Valda in the men's freestyle 84kg division.

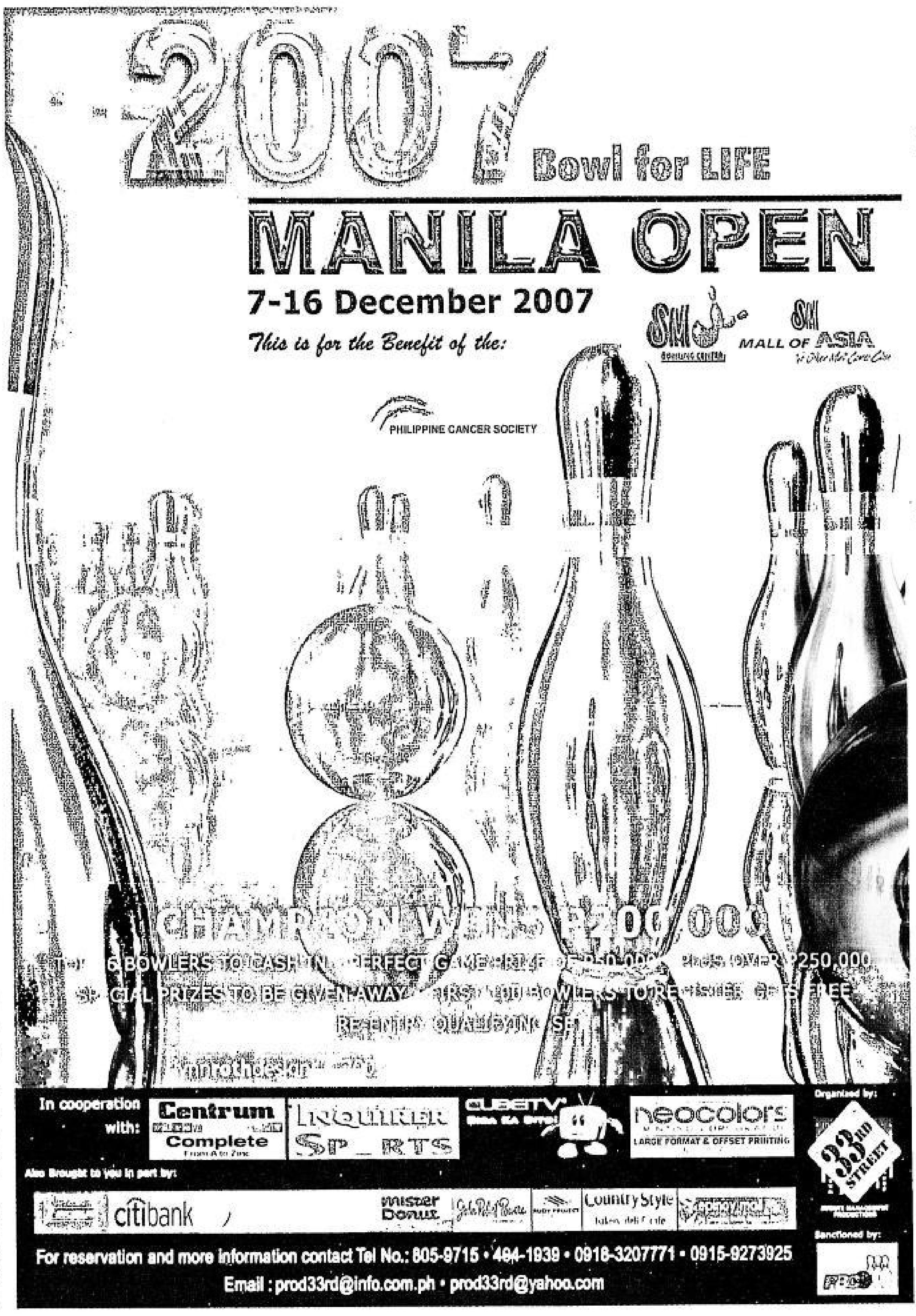
Seven bronze medals, one of them from dethroned women's cross country queen Marites Bitbit, rounded out the performance of the Filipinos, who are doomed to lose their overall title and now seemingly face the dour prospect of salvaging second place over Vietnam, Malaysia and Singapore.

At presstime, Thailand was on its way to the expected runaway victory with 31 golds on top of 30 silvers and 15 bronzes. Vietnam was second with a gold-silver-bronze tally of 14-6-20 followed by Singapore at 10-9-10, Malaysia at 5-5-8 and the Philippines at 3-8-9.

The Harbour Centre-Philippine cage team blasted Cambodia, 136-82, with the Filipinos expending just enough energy while the coaches from Malaysia, Singapore and host Thailand eagerly followed their moves from the sidelines.

Expected to command as much attention are the Fil-Am reinforced cagebelles under Fritz Gaston, whose game against Singapore Saturday should serve as a gauge whether

RP TANKERS/ A27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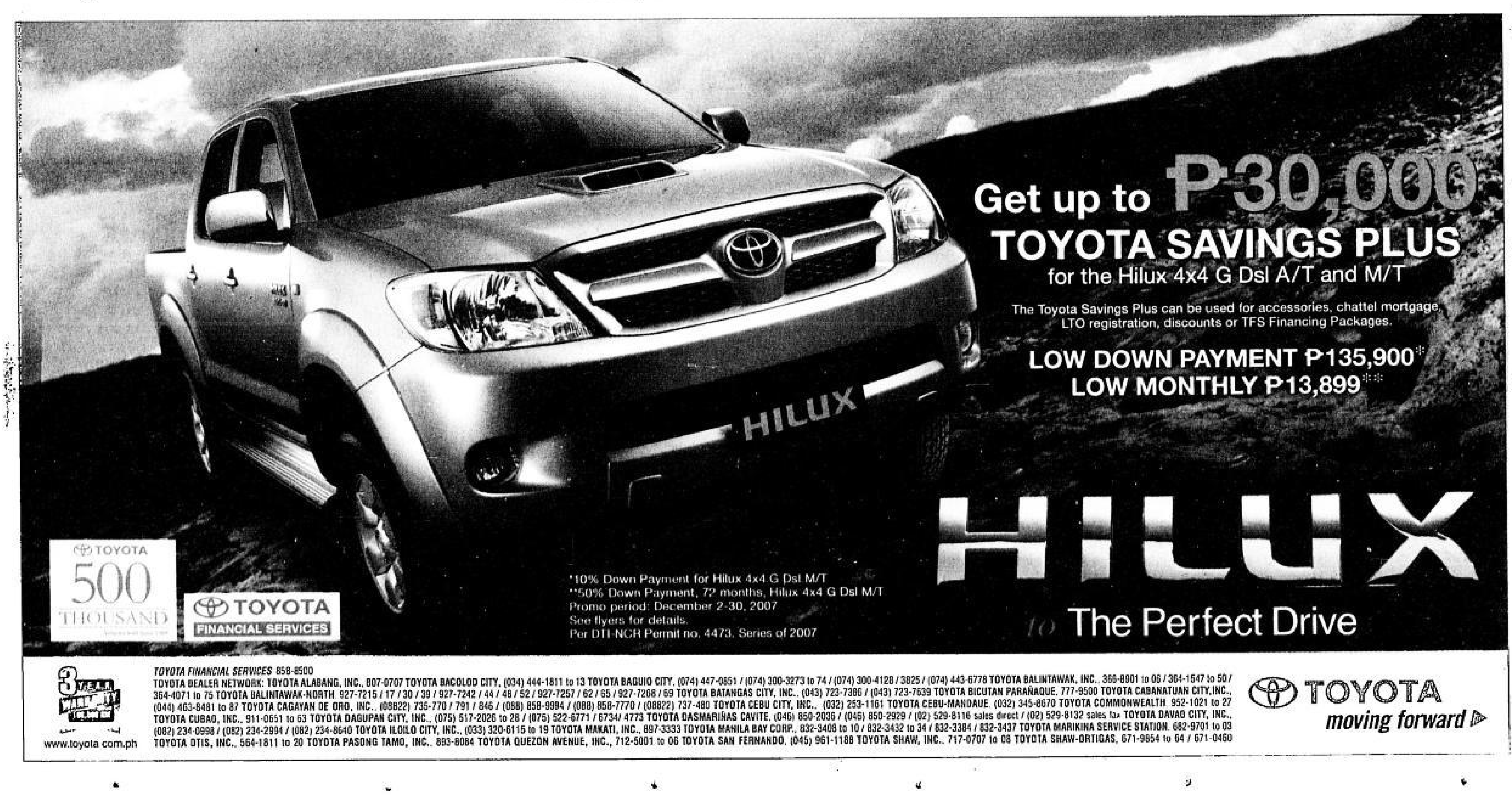
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Filipinos roll under Thai juggernaut in athletics

Go's charges manage just 2 silvers, 3 bronzes on Day 1

By Musong R. Castillo

NAKHON RATCHASIMA—THE FIRST BATCH OF FILIPINO BETS TO PLUNGE into action in athletics at the 24th Southeast Asian Games here managed just two silver and three bronze medals.

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THAILAND

Rosie Villarito finished second—though by a mile—to Thailand's Buoban Panang in the women's javelin, while Mary Grace Milgar was runner-up to another Thai, Wassana Winatho, in the 400-meter hurdles as the hosts won five of the first nine finals of the competition which got going at His Majesty the King's 80th Birth Anniversary Stadium.

Panang made a heave of 55.97 meters that eclipsed her old SEA Games record of 55.06 which she set in the 2005 Games in Manila.

Milgar clocked 59.07 seconds in settling for second to Winatho, who won virtually unopposed in 57.21. The Filipina nipped Vietnam's Bguyen Thi Nu for the silver.

Athletics chief Go Teng Kok had earlier said his charges could win at least 10 gold medals here.

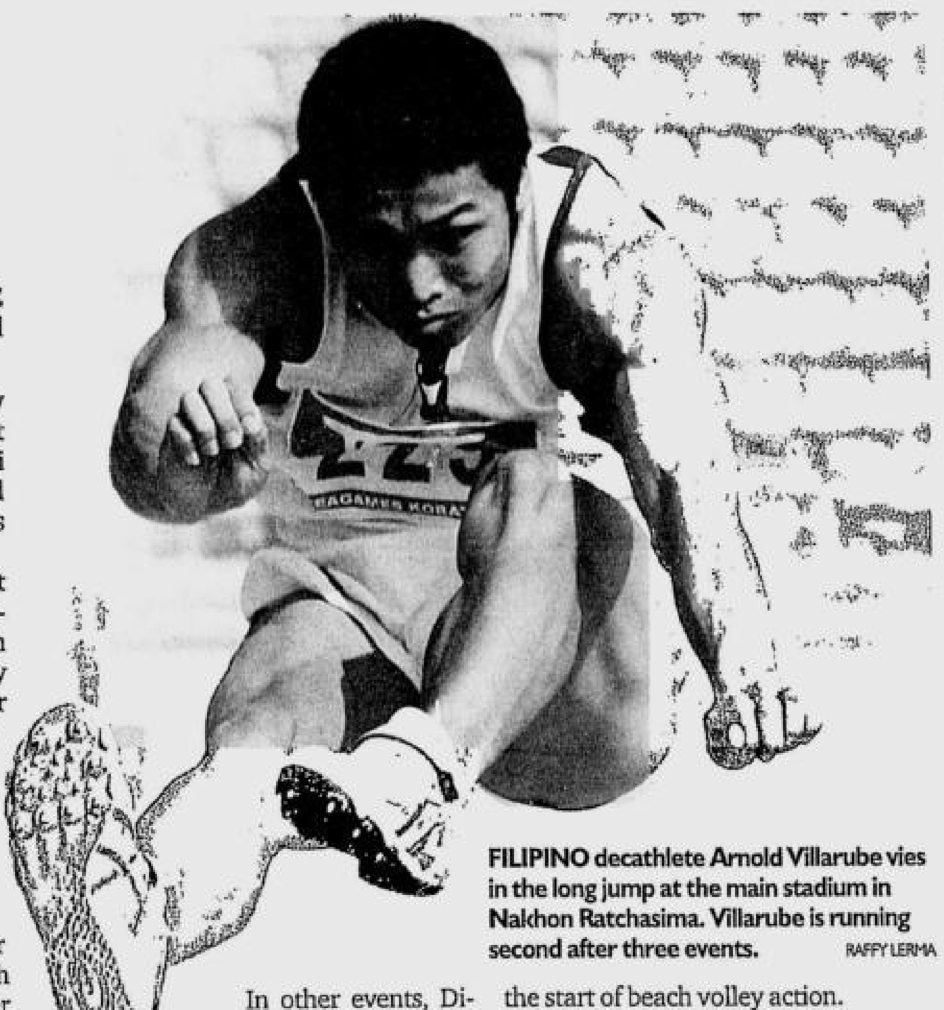
Eliezer Sunang was third in the men's shotput, also falling to a record-setting Thai. Sunang had a throw of 15.62 meters, way short of the 17.43 by Chatchawai Polyemg, who shattered Singaporean Dong Enxin's four-year mark of 17.28.

Julius Sermona ran out of steam in the 5,000m, losing to Boonthung Srisung in 14:24.72. The Thai won by almost six seconds after peeling away from the main pack inside the final two laps.

Veteran Jobert Delicano owned the Filipinos' final bronze, going 16.07 meters on his third attempt, just 37 centimeters off the record 16.44 of Thai Theerayut Philakong.

The Philippines failed to put a runner in the women's 100-meter finals with Sheena Atilano unable to finish her semifinal heat and Sharon Jizmundo bombing out in 12.46 seconds, the second worst time in the 11-strong field.

In comparison, Lydia de Vega-Mercado timed 11.28—the event's 20-year-old record—in winning the gold in 1987.



FILIPINO decathlete Arnold Villarube vies in the long jump at the main stadium in Nakhon Ratchasima. Villarube is running second after three events. RAFFY LERMA

In other events, Diane Pascua and Heidi Ilustre, Fil-American players honed overseas with the Beijing Olympics as their final target, ripped their Malaysian foes, Teng Kee Luk and Isaw Ari Manokharan, 21-11, 21-11, at the start of beach volley action.

Michelle Laborte and Michaela Carolino, the second RP Team in the event kept in step in the same overpowering manner after a 21-13, 21-13 demolition of Siamphay Senanong and Mina Lakhouneheuang of Laos.

RP squad rugby's 'surprise package'

NAKHON RATCHASIMA—TO ITS Southeast Asian Games rivals, the RP men's rugby squad remains a big question mark. Coach Roderick Hartley of Australia prefers to keep it that way.

"Every act, every move, every word we do in public has a purpose," said Hartley, a 55-year-old former varsity rugby standout from Sydney and now a marine engineering instructor.

"The less our foes think of us, the better. Now the other teams like Singapore, Malaysia and Thailand are ignoring the Philippines, believing we are not a threat. That's just fine."

This is the first time the Philippines is fielding a rugby team in the SEAG, and putting the squad together was a feat in itself, said Hartley, a 12-year Manila resident who is also the vice president of the Philippine Rugby Football Union.

"Once we knew that rugby would be in the Games, we started sending e-mails to everyone we knew overseas with Filipino roots who played the game. The response was great," added Hartley.

Coming from strong rugby nations, the players include Filipino-British actor-model Andrew Wolff, the Saunders brothers Oliver, Matthew and Benjamin, who hail from Wales, and Mike Letts, who competes in Australia.

Collectively called the "Sons of Lapu-Lapu," the team has also scored a first, even before its first game against Singapore this Sunday: All of its members chipped in to make the trip here.

"All of us paid our way here," Hartley said. "We met all the financial and other requirements to join the delegation."

Hartley thanked TCC Shipping, RTH Consultancy and Leighton contractors for helping sponsor the team.

But just how strong is this team in the Games?

"You and all the other teams will know by Sunday," Hartley winked.

Chef de Mision: Mission won't be accomplished

By Marc Anthony Reyes

THE CHIEF HAS RAISED THE WHITE flag, too.

The Philippines' *chef de mision* to the 24th Southeast Asian Games, Rep. Monico Puentevella, yesterday echoed the sentiments of Philippine Olympic Committee that the Games overall championship slipped through the Filipinos' fingers on the day the Games began in Thailand.

"This is just being realistic," said Puentevella, also the POC first vice president. "I was hoping for a little miracle but miracles are also very expensive these days."

As of press time last night, Thailand had already amassed 19 gold medals with the RP contingent managing only one, through Joey Barba in mountain bike's downhill event (*See banner story on A29*), to be in sixth place.

"A decent second place will do," said Puentevella.

Thailand sports officials earlier made a forecast that didn't include the Philippines among the top three. It put Vietnam, Malaysia and Singapore as Thailand's toughest contenders.

Agojo, Ardina no-show for lady golfers

By Musong R. Castillo

PAK THONG CHAI, THAILAND—THE PHILIPPINE women's golf team, to borrow a popular term, is terribly "under-clubbed."

Veteran internationalists Jayvie Agojo and Dottie Ardina failed to secure permissions from their respective schools in the United States, leaving the RP squad without its top two players for the 24th Southeast Asian Games here.

Agojo, who won the individual silver at The Country Club in Sta. Rosa, Laguna in 2005, and Ardina, winner of a string of tournaments back home and abroad, were originally the spearheads of the squad that also includes Anya Tanpinco.

But Agojo, the 2004 RP Amateur champ, could not get a reprieve from her studies at Pepperdine and Ardina from the Leadbetter Pendleton Academy in Florida, crippled the RP squad and its chances.

This development has left the NGAP no choice but to tap the relatively inexperienced Regina de Guzman and Shihiro Ikeda, a 19-year-old who will get her baptism of fire in representing the Philippines at the Bonanza Golf and Country Club, about 120 kilometers from the main stadium in Nakhon Ratchasima.

Agojo teamed up with Fil-Aussie Frances Bondad and Tanpinco for the team silver in 2005.

The 54-hole women's event will not open until Dec. 11 as men's action gets the event off the ground on Monday, with the RP squad seeking to defend the individual and team titles using a new crew culled from two leading stables back home.

Mark Fernando and Jonel Ababa, products of the ground-breaking National Caddies' Open, and ICTSI products Anthony Fernando and Ferdinand Aunzo are the members of the men's squad that will be without RP ace Jay Bayron.

Bayron had asked permission from the NGAP to try his luck on the Asian Tour qualifying that runs smack with the schedule here.

Juvic Pagunsan won the 2005 Games' individual gold and powered his team that included Artemio Murakami to victory. Both have since turned pro.

BRAVE STAND: Nikki Camille Zoleta returns to Australian Ashling Sumner. RYAN LIM

Alcantara, Barte blast Thais, barge into semis; Zoleta falls

By Marc Anthony Reyes

THE PHILIPPINES' FRANCIS Casey Alcantara and Ralph Kevin Barte hurdled their respective foes yesterday to advance to the semifinals and make up for the crushing defeat of the country's remaining hope in the girls' division of the Phinma ITF junior tennis tournament at the Rizal Memorial Tennis Center.

The top-seeded Alcantara, a veteran internationalist, needed a tie-break in the first set to fire up his game and defeat Thailand's sixth seed Sorapon Imprapal, 7-6 (3), 6-2, while Barte bundled out another Thai, seventh seed Phaninthon Pakpoomkamo, 6-2, 6-4.

Their victories made up for the 6-2, 6-1 defeat Nikki Camille Zoleta suffered at the hands of Australian Ashling Sumner in the quarterfinals.

"I'm playing my best tennis now, I'm very confident of my chances," said Alcantara who is fresh off his victory in an ITF junior championship last month in Malaysia.

The world's No. 195 forged a semifinal showdown with compatriot and third seed Pablo Olivarez II, who outlasted Croatian eighth seed Vedran Ljubicic, 6-0, 6-7 (5), 6-4.

Barte will next face off with Australian fifth seed James Duckworth, who disposed of Chinese Taipei's Chang Yu-chi, 6-2, 6-2.

In girls' play, Sumner arranged a final four duel with fellow Australian Cody Morris, who overcame Romania's Ioana Laura Alecsiu, 6-4, 4-6, 6-2.

Eighth-seeded Japanese Maho Kowase thrashed her compatriot Riko Fujioka, 6-1, 6-2, to advance against Australia's Hayley Ericksen, a 7-5, 6-3 winner over Thai top seed Satjaporn Mahajaroenkl.

It's all over but the shouting for Club Marinduque at Fil-Am

By Jong Arcano
Inquirer Golf editor

BAGUIO—NEW RECRUIT PETER VILlaber's brilliant relief job yesterday underscored the strength of Club Marinduque and it's all over but the shouting for the talent-laden squad in the 58th Fil-Am golf championship wars here.

Villaber came through with a two-under-par card worth 38 points in a surprise backup effort to spearhead Jay Bayron as Club Marinduque stormed ahead by 14 points in the Fil division and took a commanding 21-point margin in the Am category with Jessie Balasabas leading the attack.

The 20-year-old Villaber, another prized find from Davao and the newest standout of the Calatagan stable of Tommy Manotoc, didn't look like a Fil-Am first timer with his five-birdie round at Camp John Hay, where greens went as fast as 14 in the Stimpmeter.

Bayron, bent on ending his amateur career with a victory here, produced 39 as the top scorer for Marinduque, and counting the 37 of Mario Labajo and 33 of Rufino Bayron, the three-time defending champions had their highest output in three days of 147 points to raise their total to 413 with only one round to go.

There were imminent signs of a Manila Southwoods rally with Mike Bibat rebounding from a no-count stint the previous day to shoot a tournament-best 40, Tonton Asistio exploding with a 39 and Gene Bondoc contributing a 35.

But the 28 of Chun Il-jin and the absence of a fifth man due to the departure of national champion Tony Fernando for the SEA Games told heavily on the Southwoods comeback bid.

They finished with a 142 for the day.

"We're in pretty good shape but we still cannot discount a Southwoods rally," said Marinduque captain Manotoc, who arrived yesterday from Manila.

Manotoc was happy with the prospect of his boys moving closer to their fourth version of a twin-kill at the expense of Southwoods.

A Southwoods rally, however, seems out of the question in the Am side, where Marinduque gained what it lost in yesterday's third round due to the late disqualification of Balasabas.

Balasabas' 36-point effort was wasted as well as his individual bid for a scorecard left unsigned by his marker.

Balasabas, however, put the incident behind him and delivered a 34 like Dave Hernandez, further bloating the Marinduque lead. Zanie Boy Guialon carded a 33 and Joseph Labajo had a 29 for Marinduque's 130 for the day that gave them a 54-hole total of 390.

Southwoods was at 369 with Junjun Plana's 33 as its best score.

Updated results of the Fil-Am sponsored by Mazda Phils, Club Car, Wilson, Royal Carribean, El Nido Resorts, My Phone, can be viewed at pilipinasgolf.com, the joint website of INQUIRER Golf and Golf Digest Philippines.

CLUB Marinduque's Peter Villaber surveys the elevated green of hole No. 9 before making his second shot. The 38 points of Tommy Manotoc's newest find from Davao was second only to Mike Bibat's 40 for the day. BONG MERCADO

Unrest brewing among athletes

NAKHON RATCHASIMA—THERE is a brewing unrest among Filipino athletes here. Their usual $300 allowance for the SEA Games, regardless of how many days they're scheduled to compete, will now be changed to a $30 a day.

This means that an athlete seeing action for two days will get only $60, and so on, despite what officials said was an assurance from President Macapagal-Arroyo during their courtesy call recently that they will get their old allowance.

Sports commissioner Richie Garcia acknowledged this development Friday, saying the Philippine Sports Commission can't do anything because it has to follow the directive from the Commission on Audit.

"The PSC wanted to give them even more, but our hands are tied," Garcia said. "We understand their plight and are trying to restore their old allowance."

* * *

The 24th SEA Games is the biggest ever in terms of the number of sports, athletes and competition venues. More than 7,000 athletes are competing for 475 gold medals in 43 sports.

As host of the SEAG for the third time, Thailand has the biggest delegation with about 1,400 athletes and officials. *Ernesto A. Gonzales*

THE PHILIPPINE team's Fil-Am star Gabe Norwood tears the middle and scores in the game against Cambodia. RAFFY LERMA

RP cagers hold punches, still rout Cambodia

By Musong R. Castillo

NAKHON RATCHASIMA—OVERpowering.

That was the way the fancied Philippine team debuted Friday afternoon as the Filipinos broke away late in the first period and ripped Cambodia to shreds, 136-82, at the start of basketball action in the 24th Southeast Asian Games.

With as many foreign coaches scouting the team as there were Filipinos that cheered the team on, the Philippines still put on a clinical display despite hiding its true strengths.

"We held our plays back," coach Junel Baculi told scribes at the Keelapirom Stadium here. "All of our plays were basically designed just for this game. We did not want to give anything away to the coaches who were scouting us."

Gabe Norwood scored 11 points in the most electrifying ways and eight others scored in twin digits for Baculi as the Filipinos led by as many as 55 several times, the last on a short jumper by the 6-foot-5 point guard for 126-71 with 4:06 left.

The victory served notice of how well-prepared this squad is to returning as king of the region after the event was scrapped in Manila two years ago because of a squabble between the Philippine Olympic Committee and the then-governing Basketball Association of the Philippines.

Center Beau Belga led the Filipinos with 17 points and gunslinger Jonathan Fernandez added 16 as all 12 players who stepped on the floor scored at least three points.

The game was tight for a while, with the Cambodians managing to hold the score to 14-17.

But the Filipinos, who used varied defensive ploys to confuse the Cambodians and the coaches who were scouting them , came up with runs one after the other to take a 70-26 lead at the break.

And the Philippines, which has lost only two games in a rich history in this event, refused to slow down as Norwood came up with some showtime slam dunks that eventually shoved the Filipinos to a 106-54 lead after three periods.

Meanwhile, confusion marred the start of the women's side after the schedule was revised for the nth time on Thursday night.

The Filipinos, aiming to win the gold for the first time, were supposed to slug it out with Singapore earlier only to learn that their game had been moved for Saturday at 3 p.m.

"It's all part of the homecourt edge that they (Thais) have," women's coach Fritz Gaston said. "It's their prerogative. They are wary of us because they have seen so many new faces in the lineup."

The scores:

PHILIPPINES 136—Belga 17, Fernandez 16, Bautista 15, Salangsang 15, Vergara 13, Chan 12, Norwood 11, Alonzo 11, Castro 10, Cruz 8, Rodriguez 5, Tan 3.

CAMBODIA 82—Sopeen 32, Mohn 25, Taing 8, Ung 7, So 4, Kim 4, Pheng 2, Lim 0, Kim 0, Eng 0.

Quarters: 33-16, 70-26, 106-54, 136-82

Pugs in 3-1 start as Semillano, Castro pull thru

GODFREY Castro: Easy victory

By Recah Trinidad

NAKHON RATCHASIMA—SYDNEY Olympian Larry Semillano led a fiery 3-1 charge into the semifinals by the Philippines by dusting off Vietnam's Quang Duc Din in the first day of boxing competitions at the Mueangpug Municipal Gymnasium Friday.

Flyweight Godfrey Castro scored a stoppage over Laotian Xayyapone Chanthasone after Annalisa Cruz swamped Min Zaw Myo of Myanmar, 28-12, in the women's light bantamweight quarterfinals for a strong start that was tainted by the lone defeat suffered by Josie Gabungco against Yen Yu Tin Hai of Vietnam, 6-9, in the 46 kg class.

The 31-year-old Semillano, lone RP boxing gold medalist in the 1997 Southeast Asian Games in Jakarta, opened up cautiously before pouring it on in the second round and pulling away in the closing round, 27-7, to the cheers of an appreciative young crowd.

The RP team parades five more fighters in both the men's and women's divisions in the quarterfinals today for the country's defense of the boxing championship won in Bacolod City in 2005.

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"So far so good, even if we dropped one bout," said Amateur Boxing Association of the Philippines president Manny Lopez.

Lopez said Gabunco could have submitted a better result had she not been rushed into the ring, without the benefit of a warm-up.

Although the Philippines failed to field its finest simonpures here, experts predict another confrontation between the Thai and Filipino fighters for the boxing championship.

In fact, Castro, after his sensational second-round dumping of his Laotion foe, promptly arranged a semifinal confrontation with the legendary Thai flyweight Somjit Jongjohor, who toyed with Indon Bonyk Yusak Saweho, 24-4.

The RP team, which won a total of eight gold medals—four each by the men and women—to grab the boxing crown from Thailand two years ago, has pulled out its top bets, including Beijing Olympic qualifier Harry Tañamor, from competitions here.

That could be equal to surrendering the crown ahead of actual competitions, but the fate of the RP boxing campaign won't be determined until the finals cast has been completed.

Merciless Mamiit sparks RP netters

By Musong R. Castillo

NAKHON RATCHASIMA—FLAMboyant Cecil Mamiit triumphed with workmanlike efficiency while Eric Taino more than broke up a sweat to push the Philippines to the semifinals of the team tennis event of the 24th SEA Games.

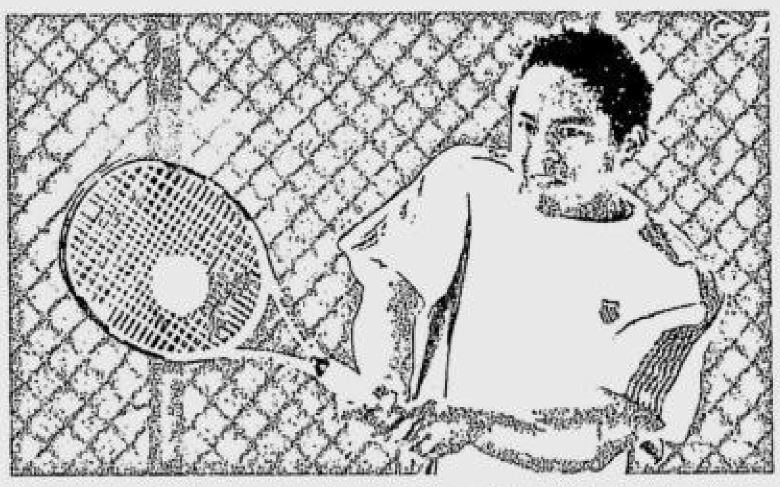
Mamiit, the defending individual champion, was merciless in a 6-0, 6-0 whitewash of Tola Thun, while Taino had to bounce back from a second set loss before winning, 7-6 (3), 6-7 (4), 6-1, over Nysan Tan that propelled the Filipinos to a sweep of Cambodia.

Patrick John Tierro and Johnny Arcilla then fashioned out a 6-1, 6-1 win over Thun and Sambat Orn in the no-bearing doubles.

That put the third-seeded RP squad into the Final Four opposite top-ranked Thailand, which got similar lopsided victories from Sonchat Ratiwatana and Weerapat Doakmaikli in the singles opposite Malaysian foes.

Ratiwatana tore Kanagaraj Balakrishnan apart, 6-1, 6-1, while Doakmaikli scored a 6-2, 6-2 victory over YM Si.

It was actually a day of short work for some of the fancied bets in this event, with Mamiit, who was cheered on by his mother and aunt at courtside, needing just 33 minutes to pound out the win.



CECIL Mamiit hits a forehand against Nysan Tan of Cambodia whom he whitewashed, 6-0, 6-0. RAFFY LERMA

Ratiwatana, on the other hand, was on the court for only 38 minutes.

The 32-year-old Taino, meanwhile, shook off some sluggishness and got himself into form just in time, winning in two hours and 16 minutes against a foe lightly regarded at the start.

Vietnam and Indonesia were in the other semifinal pairing after plastering Laos and Myanmar, respectively, with sweep victories as well.

Quiñones bags silver in cross-country race

By Musong R. Castillo

KHAO YAI THIENG—VETERAN Eusebio Quiñones and Nino Surban finished 2-3 behind a Thai at the end of the mountain cycling competition of the 24th Southeast Asian Games at the Khao Yai Thieng course here.

The 34-year-old Quiñones, a veteran of several Tour Pilipinas bikathons and the gold medalist in this event in 2001, clocked 2 hours, 1 minute and 58 seconds for the 41-kilometer cross-country course, finishing a full 2:30 behind Tawatchai Masae.

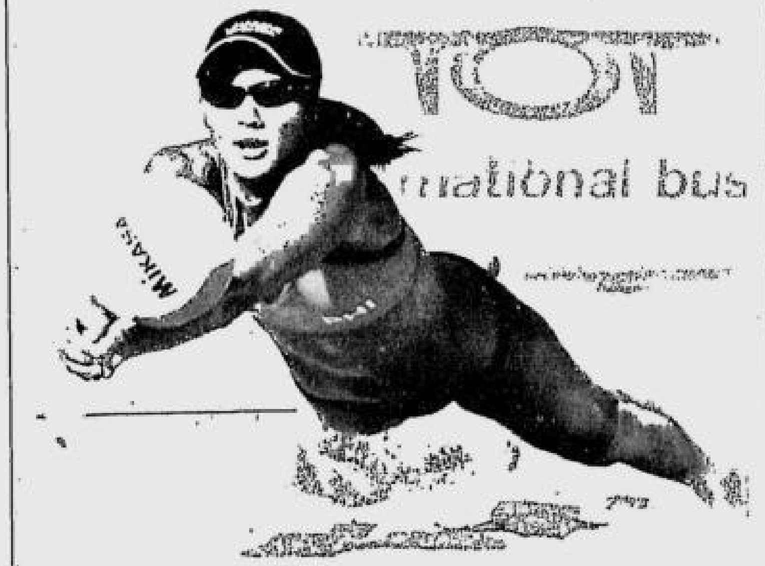
Surban bagged the bronze after checking in 1:12 behind Quiñones and 3:42 after the Thai star, who won the first cycling title for the hosts after their downhill rider was upended by Joey Barba on Thursday.

"Tough luck," Quiñones, who also won the bronze in Vietnam, said in Filipino. "I thought I had a real shot at the gold medal, but the Thai knew the course and it worked to his advantage. But a silver medal is not bad."

Maritess Bitbit equaled Surban's feat in the distaff side, checking in 3:54 behind gold medalist Thi Thanh Huyen Nguyen and Thanh Dam Nguyen, both of Vietnam.

Thi Thanh timed 1:56:17 for the 32.8 km course, which was so tough that it claimed the chances of the home bet, Jindarat Pornbanchoedkul, who took a nasty spill halfway through the run and failed to finish.

Frederick Feliciano, the brightest hope for the Philippines in the event, wound up in 11th place, nearly 19 minutes behind Masae.



HEIDI Ilustre dives to keep the play alive for Dianne Pascua during the Filipinas' 21-11, 21-11 win over a Malaysian pair. Also advancing was the pair of Michelle Laborte and Michelle Carolino RAFFY LERMA

RP tankers make waves, strike golds

From page A25

they can go all the way to the top this time.

Three of the four boxers easily hurdled their opening matches—women's light bantamweight Annaliza Cruz, men's flyweight Godfrey Castro and the veteran Larry Semillano in the light welter class.

Sermona was second in 14:24.72 in the men's 5,000 meters, Milgar clocked 59.07 in the women's 400-meter hurdles and Villarito cleared 50.49 meters in the women's javelin.

Quiñones, the men's cross country champion in Vietnam in 2003, could do no better than a second straight silver with a time of 2 hours 01:58 with compatriot Niño Surban salvaging the bronze in 2:03:10. Frederick Feliciano, the other RP entry, was 11th in 2:18:23.

Bitbit could only finish third in 2:00.1 as she miserably failed to come up with a great follow-up to Joey Barba's nervy victory in the men's downhill run Thursday.

The other bronze medalists were wrestlers Maria Cristina Vergara (women's free 51kg), and Maribel Jambora (women's free 48kg), Jobert Delicano in triple jump, and Eliezer Sonong in the men's shot put.

The Filipinos produced some outstanding results in the ball games but they were mostly because their opponents were still neophytes in their sport.

Now a whipping squad in Asia but a colossus in the region, the RP baseball team showed no mercy in a 31-0, five-inning romp over Malaysia to launch its campaign for a second straight title.

The country's netters also proved unforgiving with 3-0 wins against separate Cambodian foes at the start of team play.

After Eric Taino struggled with a 6-7, 7-6, 6-1 win over N. Tan, Cecil Mamiit shut out T. Thun before Johnny Arcilla and PJ Tierro routed Thun and S. Orn, 6-1, 6-1.

Their female counterparts were even more impressive, yielding only a point in three matches. Czarina Mae Arevalo gave up the lone point to the enemy in between victories at love by Diane Matias in the other singles and Diane's doubles partnership with Denise Dy.

But the Filipinos lost twice to Malaysia in futsal, bowing 8-4 in the men's division and 3-2 in the women's bracket.

Janice Hung remained in contention for a medal after the first of two events in wushu's taijiquan by placing third with 9.41 points, but teammate Stephanie Agbay seems out of the running as she stood third with 9.32.

Earlier, Pedro Quina and Daniel Parantac wound up sixth in a field of seven in the men's duilian with 9.42.

The outclassed Filipinos in athletics for the day were Albert Salcedo, Sharon Jizmundo, Sheena Atilano and Benigno Marayag.

Salcedo failed to reach the finals of the men's 100 meters, clocking 10.80 to place sixth in the first semifinal heat while Jizmundo timed 12.47 to rank 10th in the women's 100 after the heats.

Marayag fouled all his first three attempts in the triple jump while Atilano was a DNF (did not finish) in her heat in the women's 100.

Mayweather favored vs Hatton

LAS VEGAS, NEVADA—RICKY HATTON is confident he will bring home the greatest victory in British boxing history by dethroning Floyd Mayweather here Saturday in an iconic showdown of unbeaten welterweights.

The self-deprecating 29-year-old Englishman has joked about getting heavy between fights and downing a few pints at Manchester pubs with his friends, but his manner is serious when it comes to winning and what it would mean.

"It will be the biggest win in British boxing history," he said. "It would mean everything. To be the best fighter in the world in any weight division, it would be massive.

"I believe I'm going to do it. There's not a doubt in my mind. I've spent a lifetime of my career being respectful and not having a bad word to say, but in my eyes this fight is already over.

"I think Floyd is going to get the shock of his life."

Mayweather, 38-0 with 24 knockouts, defends his World Boxing Council crown against Hatton, 43-0 with 31 knockouts, in a matchup that has brought thousands from Britain to the neon-glowing Las Vegas Strip.

Many experts give the hard-charging Hatton little chance against Mayweather and his matchless athleticism.

Mayweather, boxing's unbeaten pound-for-pound king, certainly didn't seem distracted during his stop at the casino on Thursday, calmly proclaiming his superiority and insisting his brittle hands won't hurt his punching power.

"I'm never going to overlook a guy or come into the ring in the wrong shape," Mayweather said. "He's the one who shouldn't sleep at night." *AFP*

WBC welterweight champion Floyd Mayweather Jr. (left) and Ricky Hatton face off after a news conference held at the MGM Grand in Las Vegas last Wednesday. AP

Iverson scoring blitz lifts Nuggets over Mavericks

ALLEN Iverson of the Denver Nuggets drives past Dallas Mavericks defenders. He finished with 35 points. AFP

DALLAS—ALLEN IVERSON SCORED 35 points a day after putting up 51, and this time it was enough to lead the Denver Nuggets to victory against the Dallas Mavericks, 122-109, in the NBA on Thursday.

Iverson's 51 was against the Los Angeles Lakers, and it came in defeat. This time, he mixed in 12 assists for the Nuggets.

Linas Kleiza benefitted from Iverson's passing, scoring a season-best 23. Carmelo Anthony had 23 points and Marcus Camby added 14 rebounds and eight points.

Dirk Nowitzki tied his season high with 32 points and had 12 rebounds for Dallas, and Jerry Stackhouse scored a season-high 23 points. The Mavericks lost their second straight, third in four games and sixth in the last nine.

Dallas gave up its most points this season in a quarter (39, the first), a half (64) and a game.

Hawks 90, Timberwolves 89

At Atlanta, Joe Johnson's 18-footer at the buzzer helped Atlanta avoid an embarrassing defeat.

Minnesota, which lost its fifth straight to drop to a league-worst 2-15, had a one-point lead after Marko Jaric's layin with 2.2 seconds left.

However, after an Atlanta timeout, Johnson took the inbound pass at the top of the key and dribbled to his right past Timberwolves guard Sebastian Telfair and pulled up to shoot over Michael Doleac's outstretched arms.

Josh Smith had 28 points and seven blocked shots to lead Atlanta. Johnson added 21 points, and Marvin Williams finished with 20.

Craig Smith scored 20 points to lead the Timberwolves. Rookie Corey Brewer had 18 rebounds—two more than Al Jefferson's previous season high in a loss to Atlanta on Nov. 24. Despite having their reserves outscore Atlanta's by 46 points, the Timberwolves lost for the 22nd time in 24 games overall since winning at New York last April 6.

Blazers 112, Heat 106

Roy scored 25 points, Travis Outlaw had 20 and the Portland Trail Blazers beat Miami, handing the Heat their fourth straight loss.

Roy, who had 26 points against Memphis on Monday, picked up the Blazers in the second half as they appeared to be waning. He kept driving to the hoop, drawing fouls and hitting 11-of-13 free throws.

Less than a week ago, Roy was in a 12-of-53 shooting slump, and what he called the "lowest point of the season." A visit with coach Nate McMillan changed his mind-set.

"He said quit thinking so much, he said go out there and be aggressive," Roy said. "That's what I did tonight."

LaMarcus Aldridge added 14 points and 10 rebounds and reserve James Jones scored all of his 14 points in the first half for Portland, which lost the previous five meetings against Miami.

"Travis stepped up, LaMarcus played big and James Jones gave us a lift off the bench," Roy said.

Dwyane Wade had 21 points, 10 rebounds and nine assists for the Heat, but shot 9-for-26 from the field. *AP*

Kidd: Migraine, not contract issue

EAST RUTHERFORD, NEW JERSEY—Jason Kidd denied reports that he staged a protest by calling in sick and skipping the New Jersey Nets' National Basketball Association game Wednesday against the New York Knicks.

Nets coach Lawrence Frank said Kidd told him he could not play because of migraine headaches but unnamed sources told several publications the move was a protest over a rejected contract extension.

Kidd, however, spoke to WFAN radio and said, "I did have a migraine" and while admitting there had been contract talks said they were not involved in his absence.

"I would never disrespect the game by not playing because the game has been so good to me," Kidd said.

Kidd, 34, had hoped for a $15-million deal but the star point guard, sources told the Bergen Record newspaper, would welcome a trade to Dallas, the Los Angeles Lakers or Cleveland Cavaliers, where his pal Lebron James plays. *AFP*

Team Asia ahead as Sorenstam loses

PERTH, AUSTRALIA—TEAM ASIA HAD one hand on the Lexus Cup after an impeccable start to the season-ending LPGA teams tournament here Friday.

Se Ri Pak's Asians were well on track to defend the title they won in Singapore last year, taking every point available on the first day's play at the Vines Resort and Country Club.

At the end of a first round of foursome matches, which saw International captain Annika Sorenstam beaten for the first time in the three-year history of the event, Asia led, 6-0.

When Korea's Candie Kung dropped a short birdie putt on the 16th hole to clinch victory for her and Japan's Ayako Uehara over Sweden's Sorenstam and Scotland's Catriona Matthew, it completed Asia's clean sweep of the day.

Team Asia only needs six and a half points from the remaining 18 available to clinch the tournament.

The only downside for Asia was a recurrence of a left shoulder injury for captain Se Ri Pak, who managed to team with fellow Korean In-Kyung Kim to beat Americans Morgan Pressel and Stacy Prammanasudh 2 and 1.

Sorenstam is confident though that they would bounce back.

ASIA captain Se Ri-pak tees off from the 3rd hole. REUTERS

"I don't really know what to say, I thought we had a good team out there and some great pairings," she said. "We have to come back very strong and we know we can do it."

American vice captain Natalie Gulbis and Norway's Suzann Pettersen were first on the course and started strongly against Korean pair Jee Young Lee and Seon Hwa Lee, going two up after six holes despite Jee Young producing the shot of the day to sink a long approach shot on the second.

However, the pair then fell away as they struggled with wayward driving and poor putting. *AFP*

Big crowd seen during Bonds trial

SAN FRANCISCO—THE PHILLIP BURTON Federal Building here has hosted its share of high-profile trials over the years. But they may all pale in comparison to the spectacle of the Barry Bonds perjury case.

More than 200 journalists and members of the public are expected to crowd the courtroom and a second overflow room on Friday for a brief hearing that marks the US home run king's first public appearance since he was indicted on Nov. 15 on four counts of perjury and one of obstruction of justice. The charges could mean prison time if Bonds, cut by the San Francisco Giants this year after 16 seasons, is convicted.

In an attempt to corral the horde, the court will bring the judges to Bonds rather than requiring him to appear in two courtrooms, as is often the case with routine initial appearances by defendants. Bonds also will be fingerprinted and have his mugshot taken. The affair is expected to last less than an hour.

"It's going to be very quick," said Golden Gate University law professor Peter Keane. "He'll have the charges read to him and likely enter a plea." *AP*

NFL: Patriots eye 16-0 mark

FOXBOROUGH, MASSACHUSETTS—The last best chance to keep the New England Patriots from going 16-0 in the NFL comes this Sunday.

If the Pittsburgh Steelers can't spoil New England's perfect regular season, chances are no one can.

"They're the best in the NFL, they're undefeated, so we're a little more pumped up," Steelers linebacker Larry Foote said.

The Patriots are 12-0 and lead in scoring but struggled in winning their last two games by three points each in the final minutes against teams with losing marks. The Steelers, 9-3, have allowed the fewest points and yards in the NFL. *AP*

Guilty Renault escapes sanctions

MONTE CARLO, MONACO—RENAULT WAS NOT PENALIZED Thursday despite being found guilty of having confidential information about Formula One rival McLaren.

Renault could have been handed a penalty similar to the $100-million fine imposed on McLaren in September for using confidential data from Ferrari.

In the latest allegations in F1's spy scandal, team officials were summoned by the World Motor Sport Council to face accusations that Renault had unauthorized access to details on McLaren's cars.

In a statement on its website, the sport's governing body said it "found Renault F1 to be in breach of article 151c of the International Sporting Code but imposed no penalty."

Renault team boss Flavio Briatore welcomed the decision.

"I wish to pay tribute to the team, which has handled the matter with integrity and dignity. We are pleased that we can now focus fully on our preparations for the 2008 championship," Briatore said in a statement.

McLaren had claimed that Renault gained an unfair advantage last season from information about its fueling system, gear assembly, oil cooling system, hydraulic control system and suspension component.

Phil Mackereth, a former McLaren engineer, was alleged to have taken several CDs of data with him to Renault after he joined the team in September 2006.

The decision could mean Fernando Alonso's return to Renault after quitting McLaren in the offseason. The Spanish driver won the F1 world title with Renault in 2005-06. *AP*

Pagunsan grabs share of Volvo Masters lead

PAGUNSAN: Confidence is soaring. REUTERS

BANGKOK—ON-FIRE JUVIC PAGUNSAN of the Philippines charged into the joint halfway lead with Australian Scott Hend at the season-ending Volvo Masters of Asia on Friday.

The sweet-swinging Pagunsan, whose confidence skyrocketed after claiming a breakthrough victory in Indonesia in October, fired a near flawless seven-under-par 65 while Hend enjoyed a welcome return to form with a 67.

The duo lead the $750,000 Asian Tour finale with a two-day total of nine-under-par 135, with New Zealander Mark Brown and overnight leader Scott Strange of Australia lying in third place a stroke back after a 66 and 71 respectively.

Frankie Miñoza, who started the day a stroke off the lead, fumbled with a 76 that left him eight shots down.

Thailand's Chapchai Nirat, who needs to win the Volvo Masters of Asia to have a chance of lifting the prestigious UBS Order of Merit crown ahead of leader Liang Wenchong of China, gave himself a chance with a 69 and is five off the lead going into the weekend.

Liang, the long-time Merit leader, shot a 71 for a share of 27th place on 143.

Pagunsan wielded a hot putter at Thai Country Club, needing only 22 putts en route to eight birdies. His lone blemish came at the closing 18th hole when he missed the green.

"I hit it really good today and drove it well but I think the key was also my putting which was really good," said Pagunsan, last season's Rookie of the Year.

"After winning in the Pertamina Indonesia President Invitation, my confidence is really high. It was a big help in my career. I trust myself and I will try to play well again for the next two days here."

A 15-foot birdie conversion on the opening hole set the 29-year-old Filipino on his way and he turned in 32 with three more birdies.

He also took advantage of all the par fives, birdieing each of them.

"I made quite a few putts from outside six feet. I feel I can win when I play in any tournament now. I'll try my best to win on Sunday," said Pagunsan.

Hend, fourth on the UBS Order of Merit, was delighted to be in the hunt after enduring a frustrating last few months. The big-hitting Australian started his rookie season in Asia on a strong note, posting three top-three finishes before suffering a dip in form.

Like Pagunsan, he also turned in 32 but stumbled on the 15th by sending a shot into a watery grave but he bounced back with two closing birdies to tie for the lead. "It was a good round of golf and it could have been better." *Asian Tour News*

Leading second round scores

135—**Juvic Pagunsan (PHI)** 70-65, Scott Hend (AUS) 68-67; 136—Mark Brown (NZL) 70-66, Scott Strange (AUS) 65-71; 137—Prom Meesawat (THA) 70-67; 138—Gavin Flint (AUS) 70-68, Chris Rodgers (ENG) 70-68, **Gerald Rosales (PHI)** 70-68, **Angelo Que (PHI)** 70-68, Simon Yates (SCO) 69-69, Lee Sung (KOR) 68-70, Prayad Marksaeng (THA) 67-71; 139—Thongchai Jaidee (THA) 70-69, Simon Griffiths (ENG) 68-71; 140—Taichiro Kiyota (JPN) 72-68, Chapchai Nirat (THA) 71-69, Chinarat Phadungsil (THA) 70-70; 141—Adam Blyth (AUS) 72-69, Thaworn Wiratchant (THA) 71-70, Lu Wei-chih (TPE) 71-70, Thammanoon Srirot (THA) 69-72; 142—Lin Wen-Tang (TPE) 72-70, Adam Groom (AUS) 72-70, Shiv Kapur (IND) 70-72, SSP Chowrasia (IND) 69-73, **Tony Lascuña (PHI)** 69-73

SPORTSWATCH

Best hoops hits Rizal

THE BEST CENTER, THE COUNTRY'S PIoneer basketball school, goes to Taytay and Cardona in Rizal province for six days starting today.

Level 1 classes for boys and girls 9 years old and above will be held at the Harris Memorial gym in Taytay today and on Dec. 9, 15, 16, 21 and 22 and at the Cardona Municipal gym from Dec. 10 to 15 both from 8 a.m. to 12 noon.

Registration centers in the cage classes organized by coach Bunky Bacay are at Mocha Blends, Valley Fair, Taytay from 3 to 7 p.m. and the Cardona Municipal gym from 1 to 5 p.m. (or call 0922-6863660).

Those interested to join the Cardona event may also contact Badet Hermoso at 0910-6966920.

UGBA semis kicks off

THE 632-ENTRY UGBA HERITAGE CUP National 9-stag derby semifinal round resumes today at San Juan Coliseum, with more than 100 fights on tab.

"Only three participants have six wins each so far, so it's still anybody's race for the title," said Rene Diaz, president of United Gamecock Breeders Associations (UGBA).

UGBA is comprised of 16 gamefowl breeders organizations all over the country.

Charlie Yu and Jimmy Canda from Salpukan Breeders Group of Davao and Nestor Vendevil of Gamefowl Breeders Association of Nueva Ecija lead the P10-million stagfest with six wins each.

Two days of championship battles will be staged on Dec. 11 and 13 at the Araneta Coliseum.

Roligon derby up

WITH MORE THAN 100 CHAMPIONSHIP fights on tap, the P2-million *Weder Weder Lang* 5-cock derby of Roligon Mega Cockpit starts early at 11 a.m. today.

A guaranteed prize of P2 million awaits the winners.

Hosts Rolly Ligon and Super Ninja group said the fastest win champion will receive P150,000 while the second placer gets P50,000.

Palace accepts Montemayor resignation

By Marc Anthony Reyes

COMMISSIONER LEON MONTEMAYor of the Philippine Sports Commission yesterday announced he was stepping down after President Macapagal-Arroyo accepted the courtesy resignation he and the government sports agency's other officials tendered early this year.

In a written statement, Montemayor said he will leave the PSC with "mixed emotions" after serving for six years.

His last task was to prepare the PSC secretariat in the 24th Southeast Asian Games in Thailand and to ensure that the RP athletes' needs in the biennial meet are taken care of.

Though a replacement has not been named, Montemayor's departure from the PSC has again triggered speculations that a revamp at the agency is forthcoming.

A letter, dated Nov. 29, accepting Montemayor's courtesy resignation was sent to PSC chair William "Butch" Ramirez just before the latter flew to Thailand.

"Satisfaction is my foremost feeling, and happiness that I was given the opportunity to help the country's cause, its relentless search for sporting excellence," he said in his letter. "For this I express my gratitude to President Arroyo."

If you 'build' at home first, the stars will come—says Blatter

By Marc Anthony Reyes

BLATTER: $1 million for RP JESS YUSON

PUT YOUR MONEY WHERE your local talent is.

That is where the International Football Federation's (Fifa) subsidy will be most useful, the body's president, Joseph Blatter, told local sports officials yesterday.

Blatter, who arrived in the country for the Philippine Football Federation's 100th anniversary, yesterday said inviting star-rich teams like Manchester United and Real Madrid would be waste of money at the moment.

Blatter, in effect, dissuaded the local football officials from taking the path volleyball took. The local volleyball association reeled in the world's biggest stars into the country, triggering a growth of the sport hereabouts.

Badminton also does the same, bringing in the world's best to showcase their skills here.

With Fifa alloting $1 million to the PFF every four years, questions cropped up as to whether the local association can also do the same.

But Blatter said inviting the world's best players could lead to overlooking the sport's growth in the country.

"You build up your national team first so good teams will come over," said Blatter in a press conference at the Hotel Sofitel. "Then you can get sponsors to spend for the team you like."

Countries like Malaysia and Thailand spend millions of dollars to bring European and Spanish powerhouse clubs to their countries to play against their national squads. But such a move won't be as cost-effective for the country, whose national team could not even send a squad to the Southeast Asian Games and where the sport's popularity is dwarfed by that of basketball.

'Pinoys can excel in mixed martial arts'

AN INTRODUCTION TO MIXED MARTIAL arts and a more thorough knowledge about it are what the sport needs to make it big in the Philippines.

According to Benny Tuazon Jr., president of the Fearless Fighting Productions that is staging the "Ring of Fire: World Team Challenge" tomorrow at the Araneta Coliseum, Filipinos can be very good mixed martial artists.

Tuazon said the sport is a global phenomenon because people from all walks of life can relate to it.

"It knows no color and race," said Tuazon. "It is a lifestyle. The discipline, training and mental toughness needed in the sport can be used in our daily lives."

He added that like boxing, one doesn't need to be big to excel in MMA.

Tuazon also wants to organize an MMA association to develop talents from all over the country.

Four teams of five athletes each will show their wares in tomorrow's event—the teams of Ken Shamrock, Royce Gracie, Josh Barnett and Gokor Chivichyan. *Romina S. Austria*

San Beda Alabang, Ateneo 3-peat FBL champs

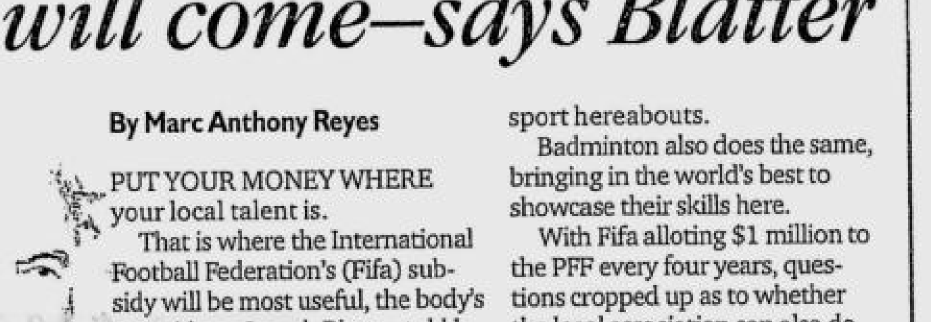
SAN BEDA COLLEGE-ALABANG AND Ateneo de Manila emerged the biggest winners in last Sunday's finals of the Futures Basketball League at the Jacinto Tiu courts of Xavier gym in San Juan.

Ateneo posted an easy 55-41 victory over Sta. Clara for its third straight championship in the boys' mini division with 9-year-old Jolo Mendoza, son of former UP-standout Jigs Mendoza, emerging as MVP.

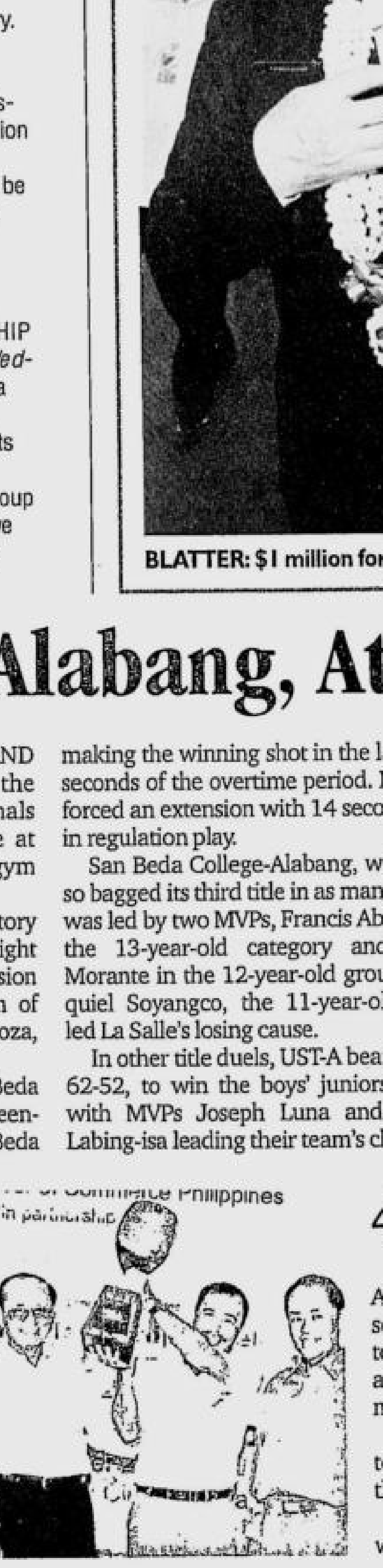
In the boys' midgets game, San Beda College-Alabang edged La Salle-Greenhills, 94-93, in overtime with San Beda making the winning shot in the last four seconds of the overtime period. La Salle forced an extension with 14 seconds left in regulation play.

San Beda College-Alabang, which also bagged its third title in as many years, was led by two MVPs, Francis Abarcar in the 13-year-old category and Alvin Morante in the 12-year-old group. Exequiel Soyangco, the 11-year-old MVP, led La Salle's losing cause.

In other title duels, UST-A beat UST-B, 62-52, to win the boys' juniors crown with MVPs Joseph Luna and Cedric Labing-isa leading their team's charge.



MEMBERS and supporters of San Beda Alabang celebrate after beating La Salle Greenhills for the Futures Basketball League boys' midget division crown.



ENVOY CUP: (From left) British Ambassador Peter Beckingham and former President Fidel Ramos join overall champion Louie Garcia and British Alumni Association chair Roberto de Ocampo during the trophy presentation of the UK Ambassador's Cup.

400 joining Southwoods golf

AT LEAST 400 MEMBERS AND GUESTS ARE seeing action in the Chairman's Cup 2007 golf tournament of the Manila Southwoods Golf and Country Club on Dec. 14 and 15 in Carmona, Cavite.

A Mitsubishi Lancer GLX, travel packages to top destinations and a lot more are at stake in the 36-hole tournament.

The Mitsubishi car from Diamond Motors will be staked as a hole-in-one prize. If no one scores an ace, it will be raffled off for the members during the awards rites on Dec. 15.

The same arrangement applies for the other valuable prizes, including an SYM Motorbike Bonus 100, the Coca-Cola Golf Holiday Package for two to Mission Hills, China; the El Nido Resort vacation package, an Asian Cruise for two from Royal Carribean International, an Alaskan Cruise for two and Korean Airlines business-class tickets for two to Vancouver.

West team wins FIBL All Star tiff

REIGNING ROOKIE OF THE YEAR AND Most Valuable Player Manoj Chandumal recovered from a first quarter slump and scored 22 points to lead the West All-Stars to a 78-72 victory over the East All-Stars in the FIBL All-Star Games last Sunday at the Adidas Sports Camp at The Fort.

Chandumal, scoreless in the early moments of the game, exploded for 10 points in the second quarter for the West as they came back from an early 13-point deficit.

The West All-Stars capitalized on their East counterparts' collapses late in the game with a 7-6 blast that turned the game around.

Prateek Chandnani added 14 points for the West, Rajesh Chulani chipped in 13 points while Sanjeev Gangwani had four blocks for the West.

Ace Knight Mukesh Mohnani led the way for the East with 17 points.

King Shark Ravi Gurnamal struggled with nine points.

The event was organized by FIBL commissioner Dilip Budhrani in celebration of Diwali, the Indian New Year.

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(047) 237-3559 / (047) 791-2653 / 0920-4526859

MOTORTRADE Balayan
Fed Realty Complex Ermita Balayan,Batangas 4213
(043) 921-2698 / 0922-854-2073

MOTORTRADE Baliuag
315 B.T. Aquino Ave Bagong Nayon Baliuag,Bulacan
(044) 673-1929 / 0919-423-5122

MOTORTRADE Bambang
ASF Bldg Homestead Bambang Nueva Vizcaya
(078) 803-1299 / 0922-9437623

MOTORTRADE Batac
Marcos Ave Brgy 8 Acosta Batac Ilocos Norte
(077) 792-4902 / 0920-2164676

MOTORTRADE Batangas
55 Rizal Ave Batangas City
(043) 723-8440 / (043) 300-4040 / 0922-854-2071

MOTORTRADE Binalonan
Mc Arthur Highway Binalonan Pangasinan
(075) 562-5253 / 0926-6900449

MOTORTRADE Biñan
124 Brgy Highway (National Road) Brgy San Vicente Biñan Laguna
(049) 4114633 / 0922-8890441

MOTORTRADE Binangonan 2
173 National Road Darangan Binangonan, Rizal
(02) 6525910 / (02) 6525963 / 0922-8890452

MOTORTRADE Bulan
Garret Bldg Along TG De Castro St. Bulan Sorsogon
(056) 481-1196 / 0921 977-9135

MOTORTRADE Cabanatuan 2
Maharlika Hi-way San Juan ACCFA Cabanatuan City 3100
(044) 463-1924 / 0915-505-7189

MOTORTRADE Cainta 1
A. Bonifacio Ave, Brgy San Andres, Cainta Rizal
(02) 6565606 / (02) 6563129 / 0922-8890453

MOTORTRADE Cainta 2
Blk 159 Lot 20 Felix Ave Karangalan Vill San Isidro Cainta Rizal
(02) 4770050 / (02) 6454712 / 0922-8893152

MOTORTRADE Calamba
Kum Kat Bldg Parian Calamba City 4027
(049) 834-2436 / (02) 545-2245 / 0922-8890443

MOTORTRADE Caloocan
418 B Edsa Caloocan City 1400
(02) 364-0784 / (02) 366-1060 / 0906-2746340

MOTORTRADE Camiling
Real St. Poblacion A Camiling Tarlac
(045) 934 1109 / 0926 691-7623

MOTORTRADE Candelaria
1505 Malabanan Norte Candelaria, Quezon
(042) 741-1767 / 092-854-2094

MOTORTRADE Candon
Candon National Highway Brgy Dapa Candon City, Ilocos Sur 27
(077) 742-5170 / 0918-2394631

MOTORTRADE Capas
Sto Domingo II Capas, Tarlac
(045) 615-0073 / 092-0203 / 0922-4804846

MOTORTRADE Carmen
Carmen East Rosales, Pangasinan 2441
(075) 582-2765 / 0916-5166166

MOTORTRADE Cauayan
Rosas St. Ext Maharlika Highway San Fermin Cauayan City
(078) 634-5659 / 0919-4746706

MOTORTRADE Cogeo
83 Marcos Highway Bagong Nayon Cogeo Gate 2 Antipolo City
(02) 647-4265 / (02) 6510492 / 0922-8890454

MOTORTRADE Cubao
579 TM Bldg Edsa cor P Tuazon St. Cubao, Quezon City
(02) 724-1647 / (02) 724-3135 / (02) 726-4661 / 0928-7522437

MOTORTRADE Daet 1
Vinzons Ave cor Zabala St. Daet Camarines Norte 4600
(054) 721-1306 / (054) 440-1200 / 0920-9276215 / 0922-3374956

MOTORTRADE Dagupan
MH Del Pilar St Dagupan City 2400
(075) 515-5941 / (075) 572 2911 / 0916-5166164

MOTORTRADE Dasmariñas
Gen. E Aguinaldo Highway, Zone I Dasmariñas Cavite 4114
(046) 850-4073 / (046) 432-1004 / (046) 970-1588 / 0922-8890447

MOTORTRADE Fairview
72 Don Mariano Marcos Avenue Fairview Park, Quezon Cit
(02) 939 7623 / (02) 430-4836 / 09193248581

MOTORTRADE Gapan
Lucky Dragon Bldg Tinio St. San Vicente Gapan Nueva Ecija
(044) 486-4594 / (044) 691-0017 / 0926-849 3321

MOTORTRADE Grace park
454 Aurelio Bldg Rizal Ave Ext. cor 9th Grace Park, Caloocan City
(02) 366-6158 / (02) 361-7691 / 0928-7279097

MOTORTRADE Guiguinto
Unit 12 North Centrum Bldg Sta. Cruz Guiguinto Bulacan 3015
(044) 794-2826 / (044) 690-0836 / 0926-688-5640

MOTORTRADE Iba
Zone 1 Poblacion Iba Zambales 2201
(047) 811-3249 / 0922-5595605

MOTORTRADE Ilagan
Tamayo Bldg Calamagui 2nd Ilagan Isabela
(078) 622-2141 / 0918-6260066

MOTORTRADE Imus
Unit 1 & 2 Legaspi Apt. Gen. E. Aguinaldo Hi-way Bayan Luma 2 Imus, Cavite
(046) 875-0383 / (046) 471-3446 / (046) 970-1953 / 0922-8890446

MOTORTRADE Iriga
Hi-way I, San Miguel Iriga Camarines Sur 4431
(054) 655-1636 / (054) 299-2464 / 0920-9270218 / 0922-6719073

MOTORTRADE Marikina Bayan
211 Shoe Avenue Brgy Sto Niño Marikina City 1800
(02) 997-2197 / (02) 911-0352 / 0918-4640292

MOTORTRADE Marikina Concepcion
8006 Bayan Bayanan Ave Concepcion I Marikina City
(02) 910-4665 / (02) 934-5112 / (02) 948-8005 / 0918-4640248

MOTORTRADE Marilao
Brgy Marilao Bulacan
(044) 711-4335 / 0906-6392544

MOTORTRADE Masbate
Luis Perez Bldg Crossing Quezon st. Masbate City 5400
(056) 333-3657 / 0919-3015004

MOTORTRADE Masinag
129 Marcos Highway Brgy Mayamot Antipolo City 1870
(02) 250-2427 / (02) 647-9109 / 0922-8890455

MOTORTRADE Muñoz
Pulido Bldg Tabora St. Pob East Science Muñoz City
(044) 456-5480 / 0916-924-7169 / 0922-521-6307

MOTORTRADE Naga 2
#89 Elias Angeles St. Dinaga Naga City
(054) 811-1375

MOTORTRADE Naga CBD
CBD 2 Brgy Triangulo Naga City Camarines Sur
(054) 811-9707 / 0920-9270211

MOTORTRADE Naic
A. Soriano Highway Ibayo Silangan Naic, Cavite 4110
(046) 856 0458 / (046) 412-3403 / (046) 507-1402 / 0922-8890445

MOTORTRADE Novaliches
1099 E. & V Bldg Quirino Highway Novaliches Quezon City 1128
(02) 419-7547 / (02) 936-2672 / 0918-4640291

MOTORTRADE Olongapo
2717 Rizal Avenue East Bajac-Bajac Olongapo City
(047) 224-8754 / 0922 9949752

MOTORTRADE Paniqui
8174 MH Del Pilar St. Poblacion Paniqui Tarlac
(045) 931-2464 / 0915-9759452

MOTORTRADE Pasay
780 Edsa Malibay Pasay City 1300
(02) 851-0401 / 851-0850 / 0918-5593255

MOTORTRADE Pasig
51 Dr Sixto Antonio Ave Kapasigan Pasig City 1600
(02) 641-0622 / (02) 640-7042 / 0916-6311085

MOTORTRADE Plaridel
Paulas Bldg Cagayan Valley Road,Banga 1st Plaridel Bulacan 3004
(044) 670 2370 / 0926-612-1823

MOTORTRADE Polangui
National Rd Venus St. Centro Occidental Polangui Albay
(052) 835-0876 / 0926-3500458

MOTORTRADE Rosario Cavite
304 Marcelo St. Bagbag I Rosario, Cavite 4110
(046) 438-2921 / (046) 971 0675 / 0922-8890444

MOTORTRADE Rosario Pasig
Unit B Caloma Realty Rosario Ortigas Ave Pasig City
(02) 640-0736 / (02) 643-0332 / 0918 6714800

MOTORTRADE Rosario,Batangas
20 Gualberto Ave Rosario, Batangas 4225
(043) 321-3511 / 0922-854-2078

MOTORTRADE Sampaloc
1571-1573 España St. Sampaloc Manila
(02) 742-2697 / (02) 781-3857 / 0920-6700957

MOTORTRADE Rosario,Batangas
20 Gualberto Ave Rosario, Batangas 4225
(043) 321-3511/ 0922-854-2078

MOTORTRADE Sampaloc
1571-1573 España St. Sampaloc Manila
(02) 742-2697 / (02) 781-3857 / 0920-670095

MOTORTRADE San Carlos
Rizal Ave San Carlos City Pangasinan 2420
(075) 531-2422 / 0920-2164677

MOTORTRADE San Fernando
ZHP Bldg Mc Arthur H-way San Agustin San Fernando Pampanga
(045) 860-2652 / 0926-6277281/ 0922-6281403

MOTORTRADE San Fernando La Union
Sevilla Norte Quezon Ave San Fernando City, La Union 2500
(072) 700-4634 / 0920-9270210

MOTORTRADE San Jose
Maharlika Hi-way Abar 1st San Jose City 3121
(044) 511-3221/ (044) 947-3809 / 0910-8009709 / 0922-918-3788

MOTORTRADE San Juan
Ground Flr YCRC Bldg Cor N Domingo & F Roman St. Balong Bato San Juan
(02) 725 5082 / (02) 725-3581 / 0920-3232396

MOTORTRADE San Mateo
Doña Isabel Bldg Gen. Luna St. Guitnang Bayan I San Mateo, Rizal
(02) 297-0578 / (02) 998-0976 / 0918-4640290

MOTORTRADE San Nicolas
Brgy 2 San Baltazar San Nicolas, Ilocos Norte
(077) 781-3503 / 0921-3685168

MOTORTRADE San Pablo
87 Rizal Avenue San Pablo City, Laguna 4000
(049) 800 2305 / (049) 562-7806 / 0922-854-2086

MOTORTRADE San Pedro 1
289 A. Mabini St. San Pedro
(02) 520-3241 / (02) 868-8279 / 0922-8890440

MOTORTRADE San Pedro 2
31 National Highway Brgy Nueva San Pedro Laguna
(02) 869-1019 / (02) 869 7691 / 0922-8893154

MOTORTRADE San Rafael
Paulino Bldg Cagayan Valley Road Cruz na Daan San Rafael, Bulacan
(044) 677-1067 / 0915-364-2925

MOTORTRADE Sangandaan Caloocan
Stall C9 Sangandaan Market San Miguel Cor E. Mabini St. Sangandaan Caloocan City
(02) 285-3525 / (02) 288-9891 / 0920-5530775

MOTORTRADE Santiago
Aggabao Bldg City Road Calao West Santiago City
(078) 682-5097 / (078) 682-1095/ 0915-373-3229

MOTORTRADE Solano
87 E Aquino Ave National Hiway Brgy Quirino Solano Nueva Vizcaya
(078) 326-5309 / 0922-9217979

MOTORTRADE Sorsogon
Maya Bldg Rizal St. Sorsogon City
(056) 211-1592 / 0921-655 5995

MOTORTRADE Sta Rosa NE
JHB Bldg Brgy Cojuangco Maharlika Hi-way Sta Rosa Nueva Ecija
(044) 311-0385 / (044) 940 0266 / 0916-833-2900 / 0917-326 0412

MOTORTRADE Sta. Cruz, Laguna
Brgy Pagsawitan Sta. Cruz, Laguna
(049) 808-5981 / (02) 810-3611 / 0922-8890459

MOTORTRADE Sucat
7604 Wal Bldg Dr A. Santos Ave Brgy San Isidro, Sucat Parañaque City
(02) 826 5373 / (02) 826-5383 / 0919-5719301

MOTORTRADE Tabaco
Ziga Avenue, Tayhi Tabaco City 4511
(052) 830-0287 / 0921-4233850 / 0922-6823854

MOTORTRADE Talavera
Matias District Talavera Nueva Ecija
(044) 411-0229 / (044) 951-1015 / 0917-985-8623

MOTORTRADE Tanauan
J P Laurel Highway cor P Carandang St. Tanauan City, Batangas
(043) 778-0109 / 0922 854-2080

MOTORTRADE Tanza Cavite
A. Soriano Highway Amaya, Tanza Cavite
(046) 505-1027 / (046) 437-5027 / 0922-4605252

MOTORTRADE Tarlac
F.Tanedo St. Blk 1 Brgy San Nicolas Tarlac City
(045) 982-1612 / (045) 800-0528 / 0927-9080330 / 0922-7265745

MOTORTRADE Taytay 1
285 Cristalina Commercial Complex Rizal Ave Brgy San Juan Taytay, Rizal 1920
(02) 658-6570 / (02) 658-6575 / 0922-8890457

MOTORTRADE Taytay 2
Door 1 & 2 Gasa Cortez Bldg Manila East Road San Juan Taytay Rizal
(02) 286-5582 / 658-6742 / 0922-8893151

MOTORTRADE Tayug
1005 Bonifacio St. Tayug Pangasinan
(075) 572 3080 / 0927-6516253

MOTORTRADE Tayuman
1497 Tayuman cor P Tuazon Brgy Lourdes I Quezon City
(02) 256-1033 / 256-3609 / 0920-6653444

MOTORTRADE Trece Martirez
L. Labogan Bldg Governors Drive Brgy San Agustin Trece Martires Cavite City 4109
(046) 046-8873 / 0922-8893155

MOTORTRADE Tuguegarao
BUNTUN HIGHWAY TUGUEGARAO CITY 3500
(078) 846-3840 / 0922-9283037

MOTORTRADE Tunasan
Sl Rancho Inn National Highway Tunasan Muntinlupa City
(02) 862-3235 / 862-3243 / 0920-2050150

MOTORTRADE Tungko
211-B Quirino Highway Tungko Mangga San Jose Del Monte Bulacan
(044) 691-0902 / 0918-4640300 / 0917-9929632

MOTORTRADE Urdaneta
Mc Arthur Highway Urdaneta Pangasinan 2420
(075) 568-5126 / (075) 568-5128 / 0920-2132916

MOTORTRADE Valenzuela
332 McArthur Hi-way Malinta Valenzuela
(02) 277-4496 / (02) 293-5690 / 0920-2903162

MOTORTRADE Vigan I
Zone V Bantay, Ilocos Sur
(077) 722-2429 / 0920-2164628

MOTORTRADE Vigan II
Quezon Ave Cor Bonifacio St. Vigan Ilocos Sur
(077) 722-5373 / 0927-3480923

MOTORTRADE Virac
SAN JUAN CIRAC CATANDUANES
(052) 811-1501 / 0921-6610042 / 0922-9638403

PEER Dagupan
Marcela II Del Pilar St. Dagupan
(075) 515-7494

PEER Gapan
Bucana, Sto. Domingo, Gapan City
(044) 486-3628

PEER Tuguegarao
D3 Carmen Bldg Cagayan, Tuguegarao
(078) 844-6620

PEER Urdaneta
McArthur Highway, Nancayasan, Urdaneta, Pangasinan
(075) 568-4278

PEER Vigan
Zone 7, Bantay Vigan, Ilocos Sur
(077) 722-8069

NORKIS PPDI Alaminos
S&F Bldg., Marcos St. cor Palarca, Alaminos, Pangasinan
(075) 552-7291

NORKIS PPDI Antipolo Proper
Circumferential Rd, San Roque, Antipolo City
(02) 695-1383

NORKIS PPDI Aparri
Sunpoon Bldg., National Hi-way, Macanaya, Aparri
(078) 888-2855

NORKIS PPDI Bacoor
Unit 100 Coronado Complex,Niog, Bacoor, Cavite
(46) 417-4249

NORKIS PPDI Balanga
DOU Bldg., Palermo St., Poblacion, Balanga City
(047) 237-1315

NORKIS PPDI Balayan
Paz St., Balayan, Batangas
(43) 921-1701

NORKIS PPDI Baler
Quezon Ave., Brgy Suklayin, Baler, Aurora
(042) 209-4304

NORKIS PPDI Baliuag
#071 P Rizal St., San Jose, Baliuag, Bulacan
(044) 766-4904

NORKIS PPDI Bangued
Mckinley St., Zone VII, Bangued, Abra
(074) 752-5451

NORKIS PPDI Batangas
61 Rizal Ave., Batangas City
(043) 723-3345

NORKIS PPDI Bicutan 3S
J&M Bldg., Dona Soledad cor Australia st., Bicutan, Paranaque City
(02) 823-1849

NORKIS PPDI Brookes Point
Pascua Bldg National H-way, Pob., Brookes Point, Palawan
No land line

NORKIS PPDI Cabanatuan
Maharlika Hi-way cor Paco Roman st., Brgy Barrera, Cabanatuan N.E.
(044) 463 6763

NORKIS PPDI Calamba 3S
Barcelon Bldg., National H-way, Parian, Calamba City
(049) 545-2230

NORKIS PPDI Calapan
Brgy Lalud, Calapan City, Oriental Mindoro
(043) 441-0148

NORKIS PPDI Calasiao 3S
Brgy San Miguel, Calasiao, Pangasinan
(075) 517-3933

NORKIS PPDI Caloocan 3S
Unit 3, 4 & 5 275 10th Ave., cor 3rd St., Gracepark, Caloocan City
(02) 366-5690

NORKIS PPDI Camiling
Ibarra Bldg., Cor Onrada st., Quezon Ave., Cacamilingan Sur, Camiling
(045) 934-1007

NORKIS PPDI Candon
Kra Square Corp., Brgy San Nicolas, Candon, Ilocos Sur
(077) 742-6204

NORKIS PPDI Cauayan
La Patria Bldg., National Hi-way, Cabaruan, Cauayan City
(078) 652-1780

NORKIS PPDI Commonwealth
270 Ground Flr, Crecent Bldg., Commonwealth Ave., Quezon City

NORKIS PPDI Congressional
199 Congressional Ave., cor Sinag-Tala st., Proj. 8, Quezon City
(02) 426-3525

NORKIS PPDI Cubao
33-35 Dona Apolonia, 23 Kamias Road,Quezon City
(02) 925-7280

NORKIS PPDI Daet
Brgy 5, Vinzons Ave., Brgy Pandan, Daet, Camarines Norte
(054) 721-4840

NORKIS PPDI Dagupan
#37 Burgos St. Dagupan City
(075) 523-9040

NORKIS PPDI Dasmariñas 3S
Felsa Amada Bldg., Zone 4, Aguinaldo Highway, Cavite
(046) 416-6539

NORKIS PPDI Dau
Angeles Square Bldg Dau, Mabalacat, Pampanga
(045) 332-1343

NORKIS PPDI Dinalupihan
O Del Pilar St., Sta. Cruz, Lubao, Pampanga
(047) 636-1315

NORKIS PPDI Gapan
Maharlika Hi-way, Bucana, Gapan City
(044) 486-6047

NORKIS PPDI GMA
MCM Bldg., Rentals Ground Flr, Gov drive, Silang Cavite
(046) 850-0294

NORKIS PPDI Guimba
[illegible] Blvd., Caingin, Bagong, Guimba, Nueva Ecija
(044) 611-0232

NORKIS PPDI Gumaca
J P Rizal St., Brgy Peñafrancia, Gumaca, Quezon
(042) 317-4517

NORKIS PPDI Iriga
Highway I, San Miguel, Iriga City
(054) 299-3503

NORKIS PPDI JP Rizal
J P Rizal St. Cor Legaspi Brgy Valenzuela Makati City
(02) 897-3361

NORKIS PPDI Laoag
Brgy 13 Gen. Segundo Ave., Laoag City, Ilocos Norte
(077) 771-1662

NORKIS PPDI Legazpi 3S
Miranda Bldg., Rizal, Bagon, Old Albay, Legazpi City
(052) 820-1506

NORKIS PPDI Lemery
AHB Bldg Ilustre Ave Lemery, Batangas
(043) 409-1566

NORKIS PPDI Ligao
DY OK Bldg., Mckinley St., Guilid, Ligao City
(052) 837 1284

NORKIS PPDI Lingayen
Pangasinan Memorial College, Alvear St. Lingayen Pangasinan
(075) 542-5138

NORKIS PPDI Lipa 3S
Ayala Hi-way, Brgy Balintawak, Lipa City
(043) 756-0575

NORKIS PPDI Los Baños
9351 Lopez Ave., Brgy Batong Malake, Los Baños, Laguna
(049) 536-3506

NORKIS PPDI Lucena
CJ Bldg., Gomez cor Granja St., Lucena City
(042) 710-6859

NORKIS PPDI Malolos 3S
National Hi-way, Sta. Rita, Guiguinto, Bulacan
(044) 682-3053

NORKIS PPDI Manaoag
Manaoag Hotel Bldg., Poblacion, Manaoag, Pangasinan
(075) 529-2711

NORKIS PPDI Mandaluyong
#11 Calbayog cor Libertad Str., Mandaluyong City
(02) 531-0949

NORKIS PPDI Marikina
191 A. Bonifacio Ave., Brgy Tañong, Marikina City
(02) 475-2534

NORKIS PPDI Marilao 3S
WBC Bldg.,McArthur Hi-way, Brgy Ibayo, Marilao, Bulacan
(044) 711-2160

NORKIS PPDI Muntinlupa
#10 Jumona Bldg National Road Putatan, Muntinlupa
(02) 861-1733

NORKIS PPDI Naga
FEDMATCH BLDG., Panganiban Drive, Concepcion Pequena,Naga City
(054) 811-8386

NORKIS PPDI Narra
National Hi-way cor Gonzalo Ave.,Narra Palawan

NORKIS PPDI Olongapo
2718A Rizal Ave., East Bajac-Bajac, Olongapo City

NORKIS PPDI Paniqui II
Manalang road, Poblacion, Paniqui, Tarlac
(045) 931-1950

NORKIS PPDI Pasig
1839 Pasig Blvd., Caniogan, Pasig City
(02) 647-3510

NORKIS PPDI Pinamalayan
Brgy Mar Francisco, Pinamalayan, Oriental Mindoro
(043) 443-1200

NORKIS PPDI Puerto Princesa
Junction 1, San Miguel, Puerto Princesa, Palawan
(048) 433-2523

NORKIS PPDI Roxas
Brgy 4 Poblacion, Roxas, Palawan
No land line

NORKIS PPDI San Carlos
Rizal Ave., San Carlos City, Pangasinan
(075) 532-4044

NORKIS PPDI San Felipe
National Hi-way, Brgy Apostol, San Felipe, Zambales
No land line

NORKIS PPDI San Fernando La Union
National Hi-Way, San Fernando, La Union
(072) 700-0367

NORKIS PPDI San Fernando Pampanga
Berron Bldg., Brgy Sindalan, San Fernando, Pampanga
(045) 963-3029

NORKIS PPDI San Jose Mindoro
Liboro St., Pag-asa San Jose, Occ Mindoro
(043) 491-1303

NORKIS PPDI San Jose Nueva Ecija
Kings Court Bldg., Malasin, San Jose City, Nueva Ecija
(044) 511-1501

NORKIS PPDI San Mateo
53 Gen. Luna St., Banaba, San Mateo, Rizal
(02) 298-0475

NORKIS PPDI San Pablo
130 Colago Ave., San Pablo City
(049) 562-0043

NORKIS PPDI San Pedro
520 Calaque St. Poblacion, San Pedro Laguna
(02) 808-3298

NORKIS PPDI Santiago
17 Mabini St., Brgy Batal, Santiago City, Isabela
(078) 864-7340

NORKIS PPDI Solano
National Hi-way, Solano, Nueva Vizcaya
(078) 326-5296

NORKIS PPDI Sorsogon
Amador Bldg., Zamorro Village, Tugos, Sorsogon City
(056) 211-1473

NORKIS PPDI Sta Cruz
P Guevarra A. corner Alferez, Poblacion 3, Sta. Cruz, Laguna
(049) 808-0586

NORKIS PPDI Sta Maria
F Halili Ave., Bagbaguin, Sta. Maria, Bulacan
(044) 641-1491

NORKIS PPDI Sta Mesa
Chasers Bldg. Unit 101-B, Ramon Magsaysay Blvd., Sta Mesa, MM
(02) 713-1427

NORKIS PPDI Sta Rosa
ETG Bldg., Brgy Balibago, Sta. Rosa, Laguna

NORKIS PPDI Sucat
Door 2&3 Unorex Properties Bldg, Lopez Ave,Lopez Vill, Sucat, Paranaque City
(02) 820-1406

NORKIS PPDI Tabaco
Purok II, Tayhi, Tabaco, Albay
(052) 830-1650

NORKIS PPDI Tanauan
JP Laurel Hi-way, Brgy. 4, Tanauan City, Batangas
(043) 729-5732

NORKIS PPDI Taytay
FP [illegible] St., Brgy Plaza Aldea,Taytay Rizal
(02) 693-1365

NORKIS PPDI Tanza
Brgy Bucal A. Soriano Hi-way, Tanza Cavite
(046) 505-2647

NORKIS PPDI Tarlac
Mc Arthur Hi-way, San Sebastian Tarlac
(045) 982-0310

NORKIS PPDI Taytay 3S
Unit 123 E Plus Bldg., Rizal Ave., Sitio Dulo, San Juan, Taytay
(02) 660-1124

NORKIS PPDI Tuguegarao
Romero Bldg., Maharlika Hi-way, Leonarda Tuguegarao City
(078) 844-2162

NORKIS PPDI Urdaneta
5th Door Urdaneta Inn Bldg., Nancayasan, Urdaneta City
(075) 568-2368

NORKIS PPDI Valenzuela
Doors 4B5C&D Lowells Bldg,McArthur Highway,Malinta,Val City
(02) 294-3962

NORKIS PPDI Vigan
Zone VI, [illegible], Bantay, Ilocos Sur
(077) 722-8176

NORKIS PPDI Cataingan
Crossing Cataingan Masbate
0910-653-5755

NORKIS PPDI Masbate
Ybanez St., Masbate
(056) 333-2684

NORKIS PPDI Romblon
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Bldg. A & B, Abad Santos Avenue, Brgy219 Zone 20, Tondo Manila
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R - CYCLE/Antipolo
Circumferential Rd, Brgy San Roque, Antipolo City
(02) 630-2009

R - CYCLE/Araneta
Ground Floor 316 G Araneta Ave Quezon City
(02) 713-5190

R - CYCLE/Bacoor
Aguinaldo Hi-way corner Panapaan, Bacoor, Cavite
(046) 870-2839

R - CYCLE/Batangas
National Hi-way, Alangilan, Batangas City
(043) 300-0323

R - CYCLE/Buendia
Century Place Bldg. Edison St. cor Gil Puyat Ave Brgy Sta. Isidro Makati City
(02) 728-1324

R - CYCLE/Calamba
National Hi-way, Brgy Parian, Calamba, Laguna
(049) 834-0833

R - CYCLE/Congressional
#51 Congressional Plaza Bldg. Congressional Ave., Quezon City.
(02) 928-1354

R - CYCLE/Cubao
#929 B Aurora Blvd Cor Illinois St, Cubao, Quezon City
(02) 439-5410

R - CYCLE/Dasmariñas
Km. 30, Aguinaldo Hi-way, Dasmariñas, Cavite
(046) 850-4243

R - CYCLE/España
#1580 España Blvd. Cor Valencia St. Sampaloc Manila
(02) 731-9374

R - CYCLE/Las Piñas
#1703 URCI Town Homes,Pamplona 3, Las Piñas City
(02) 874-8642

R - CYCLE/Marikina
J P Rizal, Concepcion, Marikina City
(02) 942-4085

R - CYCLE/Pasig
M. Suarez St., Palatiw, Pasig City
(02) 640-7490

R - CYCLE/San Pedro
National Hi-way, Brgy San Antonio, San Pedro, Laguna
(02) 520-3796

R - CYCLE/Shaw Blvd
#212 Shaw Blvd., Brgy Bagong Silang, Mandaluyong City
(02) 534-6973

R - CYCLE/Sucat
Dr. A.Santos corner Salvador estate subd.,Sucat Paranaque
(02) 543-2581

R - CYCLE/Tanza
A. Soriano Hi-way, Daang Amaya Uno, Tanza, Cavite
(046) 865-2416

R - CYCLE/Taytay
E1 Monteverde Subd., Taytay Rizal
(02) 286-1851

TDSC Antipolo
G1-G5 Emmad Square Plaza Circumferential Road, Antipolo City
(032) 696-5725

TDSC Bulacan
J P Hermoso Bldg., McArthur Highway, Banga, Meycauayan, Bulacan
(044) 391-3833

TDSC Manila
Pedrong Tower Unit 6 & 7 Ground Flr Tutuban Mall, Claro M. Recto Manila
(032) 253-6153

TDSC Marikina
#608 J P Rizal St., Concepcion Uno, Marikina City
(032) 997-5955

TDSC Quezon City 1
#1041 D & E Teodora Bldg., Quirino Highway, Brgy Sta. Monica, Novaliches, QC
(032) 930-5097

TDSC Quezon City 2
510 Dey Bldg., Quirino Hi-way, Talipapa, Quezon City
(032) 453-2316

THMC Caloocan 1
#486 Rizal Avenue Ext., Grace Park, Caloocan City
(032) 361-1222

THMC Caloocan 2
#370 10th Avenue East, Grace Park, Caloocan City
(032) 366-7064

WHEELTEK 3S Shop
Del Pilar St., Corner Nabua St., Cabanatuan City
(044) 600-0939

WHEELTEK Angeles
Eshoo Bldg Mc Arthur Highway, Angeles City
(045) 887-2477

WHEELTEK Baliuag
Bagong Nayon, Baliuag, Bulacan
(044) 673-2024

WHEELTEK Bocaue
#037 Bunlo 2nd, Mc Arthur Hi-way, Bocaue, Bulacan
(044) 692-1902

WHEELTEK Cabanatuan
Maharlika Highway, Cabanatuan City
(044) 600-2915 / (044) 463-1850

WHEELTEK Malolos
Paseo del Congreso, Malolos, Bulacan
(044) 662-2163

WHEELTEK Marilao
Brgy Saog, Marilao, Bulacan

WHEELTEK Mexico
Sto. Cristo, Mexico, Pampanga
(045) 875-1626

WHEELTEK Meycauayan
Banga Mc Arthur Hi-way Meycauayan Bulacan
(044) 840-3939

WHEELTEK Novaliches
#35 Quirino Highway, Brgy Sta Monica, Novaliches, QC
(02) 417-0257

WHEELTEK Pulilan
Sto. Cristo, Pulilan Bulacan
(044) 676-2348

WHEELTEK San Fernando
St Augustine Vill., Mc Arthur Hi-way San Fernando, Pampanga
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Abar 1st, San Jose City, Nueva Ecija
(044) 511-4245

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WHEELTEK Valenzuela
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UEMI Angeles
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UEMI Cainta
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UEMI Tarlac
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(045) 800-0640

UEMI Capas
DER Bldg. Sto. Domingo II Capas Tarlac
(045) 925-0603

UEMI Carmona
#6 Loyola St. Maduya Carmona Cavite
(046) 430-0710

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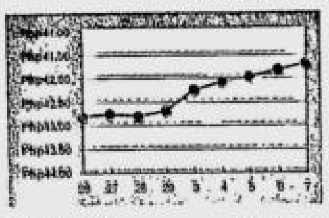
Local consumer confidence weakens

INDICATORS

CURRENCIES



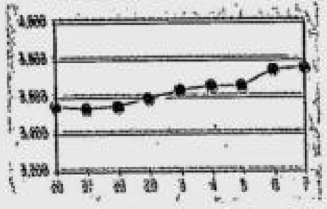
PESO-DOLLAR RATE

P41.74 = $1

As of 5 p.m., Dec. 7, 2007

STOCK MARKET

PSE COMPOSITE INDEX



(See stock market report on Page B2)

Shares close 0.3% higher

SHARE PRICES CLOSED 0.3-PERcent higher yesterday, buoyed by the upturn on Wall Street overnight as fears of an economic slowdown in the United States eased, dealers said.

The composite index finished up 11.43 points at 3,745.39 off a high of 3,772.48. Volume amounted to 1.8 billion shares worth P4.8 billion.

However, decliners outnumbered gainers 60 to 53, while 53 stocks were unchanged. The broader all-share index gained 8.82 points to 2,273.63.

The US market was lifted by US President George W. Bush's rescue plan for subprime home loan borrowers and amid continued expectations that the US Federal Reserve will lower interest rates by at least 25 basis points next week.

"That's one positive step to sooth investor fears about the subprime mortgage crisis," said Lawrence de Leon of Accord Capital Equities. "That's one less worry for investors."

Banks and property developers paced gains, with Metrobank up P2 at P62.50. Bank of the Philippine Islands rose P1 to P65.

Property developer Megaworld advanced 10 centavos to P4.35.

Some stocks succumbed to profit-taking, which was not unexpected given the market's seven-day advance, said Rommel Macapagal of Westlink Global Equities.

"It's a natural tendency to be cautious ahead of the weekend," he said.

Market leader PLDT retreated P5 to P3,120, giving up early gains. Meralco was down P1.50 at P87, snapping a six-day rise. *AFP*

BSP survey says low-income groups turn pessimistic

By Doris C. Dumlao

LOCAL CONSUMER CONFIDENCE WEAKENED IN the fourth quarter as barangay election jitters as well as security threats arising from the Glorietta mall explosion overwhelmed the optimism brought by robust economic growth, according to the Bangko Sentral ng Pilipinas' latest household survey.

The overall consumer confidence index in the fourth quarter declined by 10 index points to -33.6 percent from the index a quarter ago, largely driven by pessimism among households outside Metro Manila. The latest consumer expectations survey was conducted by the BSP for the whole month of October.

"Consumers' apprehensions may have partly reflected the concerns regarding uncertainty on the orderly conduct and outcome of the barangay election, political noises and threats of terrorism during the survey period," BSP officer-in-charge Diwa Guinigundo said in a briefing yesterday.

The confidence index is the difference between the percentage of respondents with a positive view and those with a negative view. A negative index thus indicates that pessimists outnumber the optimists.

Since a large proportion of household respondents belonged to the lower income group (59.1 percent), Guinigundo said their pessimistic outlook pulled the overall consumer confidence index downward.

"There are more people saying that the outlook seems less bright compared to earlier responses. This is their perception for the outlook on economic and family conditions. But if you look at their buying conditions, most of these are positive, which means that their intention to buy or spend their money, which is the one we're focusing on, they're all positive," Guinigundo explained.

The buying condition index for the next three months fell below 50 percent but was still positive at 46.8 percent (from 53.6 percent a quarter ago). The number of consumers with buying intentions 12 months ahead also slightly declined by 1.1 index points but was still positive at 20.3 percent. On the other hand, the buying index for consumer durables such as home appliances increased to 33.2 percent in this quarter's survey from a quarter ago.

Guinigundo said the favorable buying intention index, notwithstanding a bearish overall consumer index, was also partly due to the fact that demand for basic goods and services like food, education and medicine would not decline even if their prices went up.

"The survey was done in Octo-

LOCAL/ B2

PNB-Allied Bank merger set in early 2008

By Doris C. Dumlao

A MERGER BETWEEN TOBACCO MAGNATE Lucio Tan's Philippine National Bank and Allied Banking Corp. will finally push through in early 2008 after the Supreme Court upheld the taipan's ownership of companies sequestered by the government.

The union will allow PNB, currently the country's sixth biggest bank in assets and expected to be the surviving entity, to boost its ranking to number four with consolidated resources of P377.42 billion.

"That (merger) will happen in the first half of next year," PNB president Omar Mier yesterday said in an interview.

He noted that the merger would possibly be implemented through a share swap.

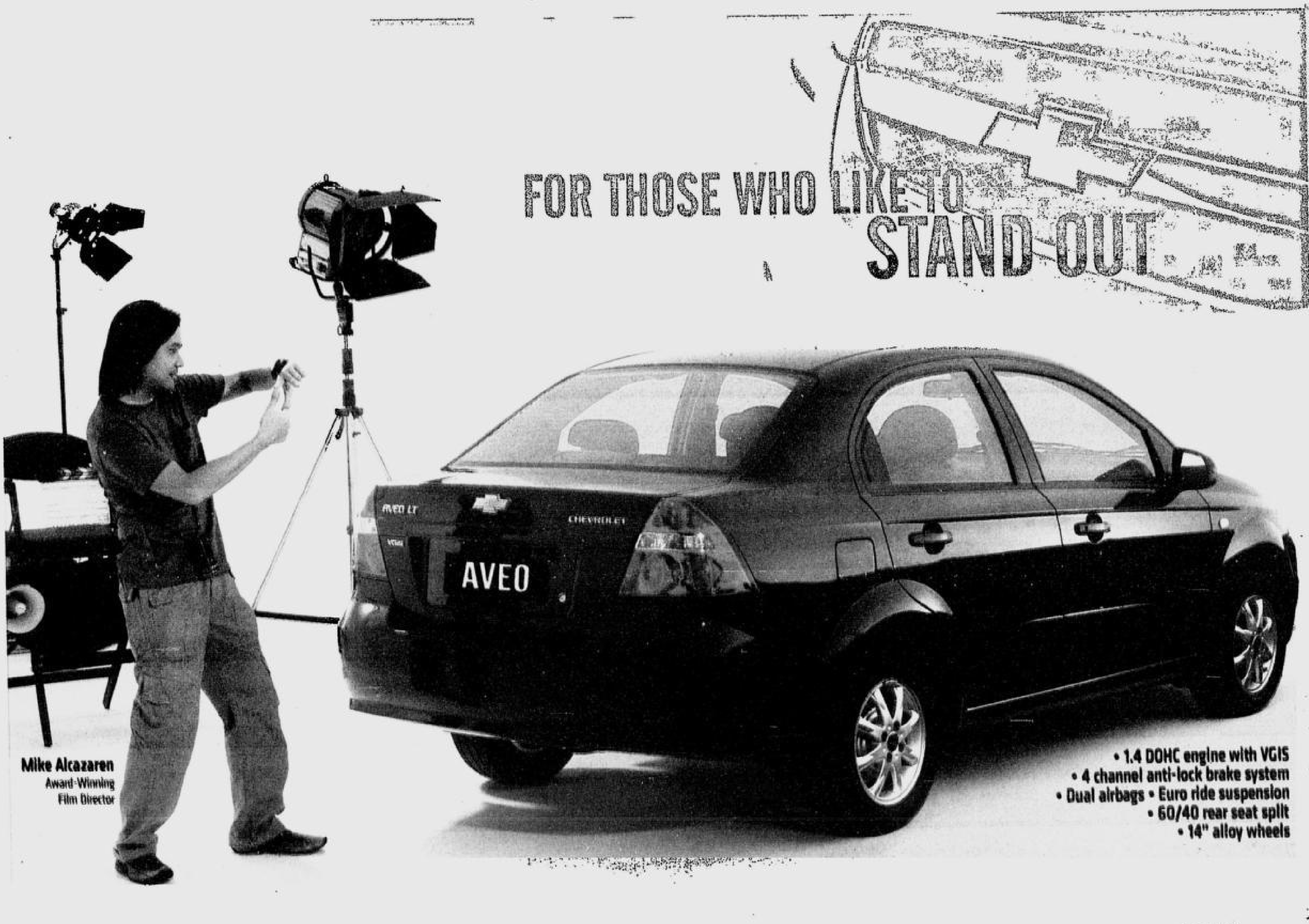
Shares of PNB surged 7.7 percent or P3.50 at the Philippine Stock Exchange yesterday on news of the high court ruling that rejected the government's attempt to seize some of Tan's assets.

PNB, once the country's biggest bank, was only waiting for the settlement of the sequestration issue to pursue a merger with Allied Bank.

PNB-ALLIED/ B3

IN THIS ISSUE

- **Listed Tan companies** rise on favorable court ruling /B2
- **Gross reserves fell** to $32.46B in Nov. /B4



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Listed Tan companies rise on favorable court ruling

By Elizabeth Sanchez-Lacson

STOCKS OF COMPANIES owned by taipan Lucio Tan were among yesterday's biggest gainers in the stock market after the Supreme Court upheld the taipan's ownership of companies being claimed by the government.

Tan's property arm Eton Properties Philippines Inc. was the third biggest gainer after its stock rose 10.53 percent or 40 centavos to close at P4.20.

PAL Holdings Inc., which controls flag carrier Philippine Airlines, was the fourth biggest gainer with its share price climbing 8.3 percent or 50 centavos to P6.50.

Philippine National Bank (PNB), also owned by Tan, rose 7.6 percent or P3.50 to P49.50 and was the sixth biggest gainer for the day.

Tan's lead counsel Estelito P. Mendoza said in a statement that the Tan group was vindicated against allegations that the companies held by Tan were acquired by ill-gotten wealth.

"Our clients are most gratified with the Supreme Court decision. It has been 21 long years since the writs of sequestration—which have been declared null and void—have been issued. It proves all along our main contention that there is no prima facie basis that the shares constitute ill-gotten wealth as defined under Executive Order Nos. 1 and 2 and as required by the Constitution," Mendoza said.

Belle spending ₱1.8B on 2 projects

By Elizabeth Sanchez-Lacson

LEISURE HOMES DEVELOPER BELLE Corp. is spending P1.8 billion for two residential projects in Batangas next year.

In a disclosure to the Philippine Stock Exchange, Belle said the project cost for Lakeside Fairways Phase 6 to 8, an expansion of the subdivision project in Tagaytay Midlands, is about P1.4 billion, excluding land cost.

Belle vice chair Willy Ocier said the new phases of Lakeside Fairways could break ground next year.

The property firm also said it was spending P400 million for a new phase of its Greenlands residential project also at its Tagaytay Highlands property. The amount excludes land cost.

In 2005, Belle completed the first three phases of Plantation Hills at the Greenlands, Belle's new farm lot subdivision.

Belle assistant corporate secretary Michelle San Buenaventura said the costs were expected to be incurred over a period of two to three years.

Belle shifted its principal activity from mining and oil exploration to property development when it built a golf course named Tagaytay Highlands Golf and Country Club in 1989.

Since then, its property projects in the area expanded to include The Country Club at Tagaytay Highlands, Tagaytay Midlands Golf Club, Pinecrest Village, The Villas, The Belleview, The Woodlands, The Spa and Lodge at Tagaytay Highlands, Alta Mira and Lakeview Heights.

Local . . .

From page B1

ber of 2007. This was the time when we had the Glorietta incident, so there was a lot of uncertainty in the market," Guinigundo said.

Consumers nationwide were likewise slightly less pessimistic on the economic conditions and wellbeing of their family in the next quarter and in the next 12 months.

Asked why the country's much-improved economic performance in the first nine months had not translated to an upbeat sentiment, Guinigundo said: "You have economic growth increasing or accelerating but there are other news and developments that could dampen sentiment, like oil prices, which everybody is watching and everyone can feel. We can't deny that GDP (gross domestic product) is going up, but the other issue (for the consumer) is: am I in the position to feel those beautiful numbers?"

The decline in the economic condition and family financial situation outlook indices was broad-based, with sentiment from all income groups generally deteriorating. The only exception was the perception on family income, where the high- and middle-income groups were slightly more optimistic.

The survey also noted that consumers nationwide anticipated that their expenditures on basic goods and services in the first quarter of 2008 would continue to rise, especially for food, personal care and effects, electricity and education.

More consumers likewise believed that the peso would remain firm against the dollar but their number declined relative to the previous survey as the index slid to 3.4 percent from 19.4 percent in the third quarter. More consumers also expected an increase in the number of unemployed persons, in interest rates and in the prices of goods and services in the next 12 months.

CURRENCIES

December 7, 2007 Country	Unit	Euro Equivalent	Dollar Equivalent	Peso Equivalent
United States	Dollar	0.683480	1.000000	41.8920
Japan	Yen	0.006144	0.008989	0.3766
United Kingdom	Pound	1.385893	2.027700	84.9444
Hong Kong	Dollar	0.087699	0.128312	5.3752
Switzerland	Franc	0.604796	0.884877	37.0693
Canada	Dollar	0.678123	0.992162	41.5637
Singapore	Dollar	0.473587	0.692905	29.0272
Australia	Dollar	0.595730	0.871612	36.5136
Bahrain	Dinar*	1.822566	2.666596	111.7090
Saudi Arabia	Rial	0.182724	0.267344	11.1996
Brunei	Dollar	0.471951	0.690512	28.9269
Indonesia	Rupiah	0.000074	0.000108	0.0045
Thailand	Baht	0.022669	0.033167	1.3894
UAE	Dirham	0.186103	0.272287	11.4066
EU	Euro	1.000000	1.463100	61.2922
Korea	Won	0.000742	0.001085	0.0455
China	Yuan**	0.092244	0.134962	5.6538
Denmark	Kroner	0.134074	0.196163	8.2177
India	Rupee	0.017352	0.025387	1.0635
Malaysia	Ringgit	0.204176	0.298730	12.5144
New Zealand	Dollar	0.527703	0.772082	32.3441
Sweden	Kroner	0.106704	0.156118	6.5401
Taiwan	Nt Dollar	0.021167	0.030969	1.2974

Source: Reuters' forex closing prices as of NY time—Dec. 6, 2007

*Various banks in Bahrain as quoted in Reuters' Screen. ** Asian time closing rate as of Dec. 6, 2007

Republic of the Philippines
DEPARTMENT OF LABOR AND EMPLOYMENT
Regional Office No. IV-A
3rd Flr., Andenson Bldg., II, Brgy. Parian, Calamba City
December 07, 2007

NOTICE OF FILING OF APPLICATION/S FOR ALIEN EMPLOYMENT PERMIT/S (AEP/S)

Notice is hereby given that the following companies/employers have filed with this Regional Office application/s for Alien Employment Permit/s.

Name and Address of Company/Employer	Name of Foreign National/Citizenship	Position
1. AMKOR TECH. PHILS., INC. Laguna Technopark, Binan, Laguna	Mr. Chun Namkoong/ Korean	Section Manager, ICS – SAP/TFT
2. AMKOR TECH. PHILS., INC. Laguna Technopark, Binan, Laguna	Mr. June Keun Kim/ Korean	Director, ICS – SAP/TFT
3. SEOJIN APPAREL CO., INC. CEZ, Rosario, Cavite	Ms. Myoung Hee Son/ Korean	Quality Assurance Manager
4. EPSON PRECISION (PHILIPPINES), INC. Lima Technology Center, Lipa City	Mr. Hiro Nakazawa/ Japanese	Manager
5. ACHI-WOOL INDUSTRIAL PLANT TECHNOLOGY, INC. PEZA, Rosario, Cavite	Mr. Sungil Park/ Korean	Design Manager
6. C & F MANUFACTURING PHILIPPINES CORPORATION CEZ, Rosario, Cavite	Mr. Paul Hynes/ Irish	General Manager
7. DECO CANDLES, INC. CEPZ, Rosario, Cavite	Mr. Tarek Marwan Bernoussi/ French	Cost Controller Manager
8. DECO CANDLES, INC. CEPZ, Rosario, Cavite	Ms. Amandine, Leonie, Rosalie Treguer/ French	Financial Controller

If you have any information/objection to the above-mentioned application/s please communicate with the Regional Director.

ATTY. RICARDO S. MARTINEZ, SR., CESO III
Regional Director

(PDI–December 8, 2007)

Municipality of Motiong, Samar
Construction of Flat Slab Bridges

Bidding Documents
Invitation for Bids

INVITATION FOR BIDS

Date: December 8, 2007
ADB Loan No.: 1772-PHI
Contract No.: SP-08-015-02

1. The Republic of the Philippines has received a loan from the Asian Development Bank (ADB) towards the cost of the INFRASTRUCTURE FOR RURAL PRODUCTIVITY ENHANCEMENT SECTOR (InfRES) PROJECT and it is intended that part of the proceeds of this loan will be applied to eligible payments under the Contract for the **Construction of 31.0m Bonga and 45.0m Nagbak Flat Slab Bridges.** Bidding is open to all bidders from eligible source countries of the Asian Development Bank that:
   - (c) are registered with the Philippine Contractors Accreditation Board to undertake infrastructure projects as a Medium A contractor or better, and
   - (d) have undertaken within the past 5 years, as the contractor, management contractor or subcontractor, three (3) bridge construction work projects valued at least Pesos 5,500,000 each.
2. The Municipality of Motiong, Samar invites sealed bids from bidders with the above qualifications for the construction and completion of the Works, which includes two (2) Flat Slab Bridges (31.0 meters Bonga Flat Slab Bridge and 45.0 meters Nagbak Flat Slab Bridge) totaling 76.0 meters. The maximum contract period for the works is 180 calendar days.
3. Bidders may obtain further information from, and inspect and acquire the bidding documents, at the office of the Employer, at:

   ACILA G. BACO
   Office of the BAC Chairman
   Municipality of Motiong, Province of Samar
4. A complete set of bidding documents may be purchased by interested eligible bidders on submission of a written application to the above office, and upon payment of a non-refundable fee of Four Thousand Pesos (Php 4,000.00). Issuance of bid documents will be on December 14, 2007 to January 12, 2008.
5. All Bids must be accompanied by a Security of equivalent to two (2) percent of the Bid Amount or an equivalent amount in a freely convertible currency, and must be delivered to the address indicated above on or before 2:00 P.M. on January 22, 2008. Bids will be opened at 2:00 P.M. on the aforementioned date, in the presence of bidders' representatives who choose to attend. A pre-bid conference will be on January 8, 2008 at 2:00 P.M., Session Hall, Municipal Building, Motiong, Samar.
6. The LGU reserves the right to accept or reject any bids and to cancel the bidding process at any time prior to award of the contractor, without thereby incurring any liability to the affected bidder or bidders or any obligations to inform the affected bidders of the reasons for Employer's action.

(Sgd.) ACILA G. BACO
BAC Chairman
Bids and Awards Committee

(PDI – December 8, 2007)

NCLEX Practice Test now Open at IAME Pearson VUE Test Center

With NCLEX now available at Pearson Professional Center at 312 Buendia Avenue Makati City, Pearson VUE Testing at IAME-Makati City has opened the NCLEX Practice Test to provide experience of taking NCLEX Exam in the environment of Pearson Test Center. The purpose of the pre-NCLEX Exam Practice Test is to remove nervousness, fear and apprehension of the nurse examinees and to give them a feeling of confidence.

IAME PVTC is also authorized to offer IT Certification for the following Test Programs. Agilent Technologies, Altiris, Aruba Networks, Inc., Avaya Inc., Brocade Communications, Check Point Software Technologies, Cisco Systems, Inc., Citrix Systems, Inc., CompTIA, CWNP, Dassault Systemes, EC-Council, EMC, EXIC, HDI, ICRM, Isilon Systems, Linux Professional Institute, MatrixOne, Microsoft Testing, Microsoft Dynamics, My SQL, Novell Testing, Pegasystems Inc., PostgreSQL CE (SRA OSS), Radware, Riverbed Technology, RSA Security Testing, SAP, Security Certified Program Test, Siemens, SITA, Inc., Sun Microsystems – SAI Program, VERITAS, Vmware Inc., Zens Technologies.

The fee for the Practice Test is P500.00 per hour. The nurse examinees may also take a refresher course consisting of 12 modules at P500.00 per hour. The Practice Test is for both the NCLEX-RN and NCLEX-PN examinations.

After passing the NCLEX Exam, the successful passer may take the TOEIC Exam at the IAME DynEd English Proficiency Center.

The NCLEX Practice Test maybe taken at the Pearson VUE Test Center located at the 4th floor of the International Academy of Management and Economics (IAME), Noli Santos International Tower, 1061 Metropolitan Avenue, San Antonio Village, Makati City. Queries and reservations maybe made through (632) 896-2358; 757-2608 or 09 local 15; 0917-8602107.

PHILIPPINE STOCK EXCHANGE

(As of December 7, 2007)

52-WEEK HIGH	52-WEEK LOW	STOCKS	OPEN	HIGH	LOW	CLOSE	VOLUME
		BANKS					
17.5	6.8	Asiatrust Development Bank Inc.	8.6	9	8.6	8.8	259,000
73	43	Banco de Oro-EPCI Inc.	60.5	62.5	60.5	62	1,216,900
73.5	53	Bank of the Philippine Islands	64.5	65.5	64.5	65	4,919,200
748	544	China Banking Corp.	670	670	665	665	4,440
23.5	14	Citystate Savings Bank	23	23	23	23	600
0.63	0.36	Export and Industry Bank Inc.	0.42	0.42	0.4	0.4	510,000
75.5	47.5	Metropolitan Bank and Trust Co.	62	63.5	62	62.5	4,359,500
65.5	39	Philippine National Bank	46	50	46	49.5	1,520,100
68	46	Philippine Savings Bank	60	60	60	60	1,000
39.57	20.43	Rizal Commercial Banking Corp.	25.5	26	24.75	25.5	989,100
90	63	Security Bank Corp.	74.5	74.5	74.5	74.5	105,000
66	42	Union Bank of the Philippines	44.5	44.5	44	44.5	121,000
		OTHER FINANCIAL INSTITUTIONS					
2.22	0.6	Bankard Inc.	1.9	1.94	1.88	1.94	496,000
16.25	4.6	CitisecOnline.com Inc.	12.5	12.5	12	12.25	423,100
8.8	4.7	Filipino Fund Inc.	8.1	8.1	8.1	8.1	3,000
1.6	0.5	First Abacus Financial Holdings Corp.	1.04	1.04	1.02	1.02	51,000
5.9	4.8	I-Remit Inc.	5	5	4.95	4.95	348,000
1,970.00	1,580.00	Manulife Financial Corp.	1,640.00	1,640.00	1,640.00	1,640.00	1,570
5	2.7	National Reinsurance Corp. of the Phils.	3.35	3.4	3.25	3.25	995,000
3.1	1.32	PCI Leasing and Finance Inc.	1.9	1.9	1.9	1.9	100,000
1,390.00	260	The Philippine Stock Exchange Inc.	1,100.00	1,100.00	1,100.00	1,100.00	1,290
2,500.00	1,970.00	Sun Life Financial Inc.	2,215.00	2,215.00	2,215.00	2,215.00	90
1.94	1.3	iVantage Corp.	1.54	1.56	1.54	1.54	550,000
		ELECTRICITY, ENERGY, POWER & WATER					
6.2	3.8	Aboitiz Power Corp.	5.4	5.4	5.2	5.3	1,889,000
0.57	0.22	East Asia Power Resources Corp.	0.44	0.47	0.43	0.45	8,940,000
70.5	49	First Gen Corp.	62.5	62.5	60.5	61	399,800
92	51.5	First Phil. Holdings Corp.	77	78	74	76	386,500
18.5	8.8	Manila Water Co. Inc.	18.25	18.25	17.75	17.75	2,765,000
105.45	29.55	Manila Electric Co.	89.5	89.5	86	87	3,089,800
7.8	4.1	PNOC Energy Development Corp.	7	7	6.7	6.7	27,461,000
7.4	3.95	Petron Corp.	6.5	6.5	6.3	6.3	10,238,000
14.75	6.4	Phoenix Petroleum Philippines Inc.	7	7	6.7	6.9	148,000
2.04	0.91	Trans-Asia Oil and Energy Dev't Corp.	1.42	1.42	1.36	1.38	2,262,000
		FOOD, BEVERAGE & TOBACCO					
6.3	3.4	Alaska Milk Corp.	4.85	4.95	4.85	4.95	75,000
2.32	1.48	Alliance Tuna International Inc.	1.62	1.62	1.58	1.58	987,000
61	40.5	Jollibee Foods Corp.	51.5	52.5	51	51.5	1,553,900
0.98	0.5	RFM Corp.	0.7	0.7	0.7	0.7	190,000
3.1	2.06	Roxas Holdings	2.85	2.85	2.85	2.85	631,000
80	42.5	San Miguel Corp. "A"	51	51	50	50.5	142,000
88	43	San Miguel Corp. "B"	51.5	52.5	51	51	375,600
0.66	0.33	Swift Foods Inc.	0.47	0.48	0.47	0.48	30,000
20.75	13.5	Universal Robina Corp.	15	15	14.25	14.5	7,498,200
0.55	0.24	Vitarich Corp.	0.36	0.37	0.36	0.37	180,000
		CONSTRUCTION, INFRASTRUCTURE & ALLIED SERVICES					
6.1	2.65	EEI Corp.	4.6	4.6	4.55	4.55	421,000
21.5	6	Federal Resources Investment Group Inc.	10	10.25	10	10.25	1,001,000
9.2	4.95	Holcim Philippines Inc.	7.9	8	7.9	8	3,000
2	0.81	Southeast Asia Cement Holdings Inc.	1.08	1.08	1.02	1.04	4,301,000
23	2.12	TKC Steel Corp.	8.8	8.9	8.6	8.9	730,000
		CHEMICALS					
6.3	3.75	Chemrez Technologies Inc.	4.25	4.3	4.25	4.25	683,000
		DIVERSIFIED INDUSTRIALS					
0.75	0.17	Picop Resources Inc.	0.38	0.38	0.37	0.37	4,860,000
9	6.2	Splash Corp.	6.9	7.2	6.9	7	4,000,000
		HOLDING FIRMS					
39	18.75	ABS-CBN Holdings, Corp.-PDR	35	35	35	35	100
3.9	2.7	A. Soriano Corp.	3.35	3.4	3.35	3.4	70,000
0.185	0.0575	AJO.net Holdings Inc.	0.135	0.14	0.13	0.135	34,900,000
1.28	0.29	APC Group Inc.	0.71	0.71	0.67	0.67	2,220,000
3.65	1.5	ATN Holdings Inc. "A"	2.5	2.55	2.5	2.55	83,000
3.7	1.5	ATN Holdings Inc. "B"	2.6	2.8	2.6	2.8	42,000
0.018	0.0075	Abacus Cons. Res. and Hold'gs Inc. "A"	0.01	0.01	0.0095	0.0095	61,000,000
9.7	5.8	Aboitiz Equity Ventures Inc.	7.1	7.1	7	7	2,152,000
0.021	0.0095	Alcorn Gold Resources Corp.	0.014	0.015	0.014	0.015	64,000,000
7.3	3.5	Alliance Global Group Inc.	5.5	5.5	5.4	5.4	10,553,000
2.9	0.9	Anglo-Philippine Holdings Corp.	2.46	2.46	2.44	2.44	355,000
8	0.8	Aries Prime Resources Inc.	3.8	3.8	3.8	3.8	10,000
645	400	Ayala Corp.	595	600	590	595	222,470
15.25	7.39	Bacnotan Consolidated Industries Inc.	13	13	13	13	1,000
5.8	1.68	Benpres Holdings Corp.	4.55	4.55	4.35	4.35	5,575,000
12	5.6	DMCI Holdings Inc.	10	10.25	9.7	9.9	14,568,000
3.55	1.76	House of Investments Inc.	2	2	2	2	349,000
14.5	8.9	JG Summit Holdings Inc.	10.25	10.25	10.25	10.25	235,300
28	1.42	Lodestar Investment Hldgs Corp.	20.75	21.5	18	21.25	142,700
11.5	1.5	Minerales Industrias Corp.	6.9	7.3	6.8	6.9	10,783,000
8.5	3	PAL Holdings Inc.	6	6.8	6	6.5	132,000
0.28	0.016	Pacifica Inc. "A"	0.24	0.245	0.225	0.235	192,650,000
0.75	0.19	Prime Orion Philippines Inc.	0.53	0.53	0.53	0.53	1,840,000
2.1	1.3	Republic Glass Holdings Corp.	1.8	1.8	1.8	1.8	56,000
452.5	268.53	SM Investments Corp.	357.5	362.5	357.5	357.5	146,020
0.73	0.14	Sinophil Corp.	0.37	0.38	0.37	0.37	1,110,000
2	0.92	South China Resources Inc.	1.5	1.5	1.5	1.5	10,000
0.75	0.12	Wellex Industries Inc	0.33	0.33	0.32	0.32	5,200,000
1.1	0.26	Zeus Holdings Inc	0.6	0.61	0.59	0.61	300,000
		PROPERTY					
2.34	1	A Brown Co. Inc.	1.5	1.5	1.5	1.5	101,000
8.9	5	Anchor Land Holdings Inc	7.3	7.4	7.2	7.4	17,000
1.06	0.4	Araneta Properties Inc.	0.63	0.65	0.63	0.65	40,000
19.25	11.88	Ayala Land Inc.	16.75	17	16	16.25	13,880,900
1.88	1	Belle Corp.	1.24	1.24	1.22	1.22	1,453,000
4.7	3.05	Cebu Holdings Inc.	4	4	4	4	17,000
0.86	0.39	Crown Equities Inc.	0.59	0.59	0.59	0.59	1,000,000
0.83	0.24	Cyber Bay Corp.	0.38	0.38	0.38	0.38	4,340,000
0.99	0.52	Empire East Land Holdings Inc.	0.89	0.89	0.84	0.85	38,920,000
6.9	1.08	Eton Properties Philippines Inc.	3.7	4.2	3.7	4.2	41,000
0.47	0.0575	Ever Gotesco Resources and Hold'gs Inc.	0.25	0.25	0.245	0.245	2,180,000
1.48	0.61	Fil-Estate Land Inc.	1.08	1.08	1.02	1.04	7,821,000
2.44	1.32	Filinvest Land Inc.	1.62	1.68	1.6	1.66	87,722,000
1.12	0.31	MRC Allied Industries Inc.	0.58	0.66	0.58	0.63	8,970,000
4.6	2.07	Megaworld Corp.	4.4	4.4	4.3	4.35	48,366,000
6.4	1.5	Metro Pacific Investments Corp.	4.3	4.6	4.3	4.55	596,000
5.2	2.2	Metro Pacific Investments Corp.-Warrants	2.95	3.2	2.85	3.1	433,000
0.7	0.13	Phil. Estates Corp.	0.35	0.35	0.33	0.33	550,000
0.86	0.32	Philippine Realty and Holdings Corp.	0.47	0.47	0.45	0.45	140,000
9.2	1.7	Polar Property Holdings Corp.	4.2	4.2	4.2	4.2	5,000
23	14.5	Robinson Land Corp.	18.25	18.25	18	18.25	1,587,600
5.9	1.93	SM Development Corp.	4.05	4.05	4	4	321,000
13.5	7.76	SM Prime Holdings Inc.	11.25	11.5	11.25	11.5	12,926,300
3.25	1.5	Shang Properties Inc.	2.22	2.22	2.18	2.2	1,603,000
4.5	0.38	Sta. Lucia Land Inc.	2.02	2.06	2	2	823,000
1.34	0.46	Suntrust Home Developers Inc.	0.63	0.71	0.63	0.67	7,850,000
0.49	0.09	Uniwide Holdings Inc.	0.26	0.28	0.26	0.27	1,170,000
7.5	3.65	Vista Land and Lifescapes Inc	5.6	5.6	5.5	5.6	8,184,000
		MEDIA					
38.5	18.75	ABS-CBN Broadcasting Corp.	34.5	34.5	34	34	2,100
12	7.6	GMA Holdings Inc.	8.8	8.8	8.6	8.7	7,063,000
11.75	7.5	GMA Network Inc.	8.4	8.4	8.1	8.2	2,416,000
1.03	0.81	Manila Bulletin Publishing Corp.	0.86	0.86	0.86	0.86	20,000
		TELECOMMUNICATIONS					
2.12	1.1	Digital Telecommunications Phils. Inc.	1.4	1.42	1.4	1.4	1,476,000
1,750.00	1,180.00	Globe Telecom Inc.	1,660.00	1,675.00	1,620.00	1,635.00	60,450
3,285.00	2,250.00	Phil. Long Distance Telephone Co.	3,125.00	3,140.00	3,105.00	3,120.00	285,710
8.1	5.5	Pilipino Telephone Corp.	7.1	7.1	7	7.1	1,380,000
		INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY					
0.39	0.17	Boulevard Holdings Inc.	0.205	0.22	0.205	0.215	3,890,000
15.5	2.1	Diversified Financial Network Inc.	14.75	15	14.25	15	1,418,100
11.5	3.55	IPVG Corp.	8.6	8.6	8.3	8.5	1,315,000
0.065	0.027	ISM Communications Corp.	0.038	0.039	0.038	0.039	13,100,000
5	1.62	Information Capital Tech. Ventures Inc.	3.1	3.25	3.1	3.25	135,000
2.9	1.1	Ionics Inc.	1.84	1.96	1.8	1.82	1,257,000
0.32	0.05	Island Information and Technology Inc.	0.175	0.185	0.175	0.185	39,140,000
2.24	1.1	Music Semiconductors Corp.	1.98	2.24	1.98	2	22,562,000
0.0725	0.03	Philweb Corp.	0.048	0.049	0.048	0.049	69,000,000
5.8	1.64	Transpacific Broadband Group Int'l. Inc.	2.65	2.7	2.6	2.7	1,498,000
		TRANSPORTATION SERVICES					
2.14	1.14	Aboitiz Transport System Corp.	1.28	1.3	1.28	1.28	325,000
6.8	3.6	Asian Terminals Inc.	3.8	3.8	3.8	3.8	2,000
49	18.75	Int'l Container Terminal Services Inc.	46.5	46.5	45.5	46.5	1,110,100
2.16	0.93	Keppel Philippines Marine Inc.	2	2	2	2	2,000
2.7	1.12	Lorenzo Shipping Corp.	1.7	1.7	1.52	1.52	90,000
		HOTEL & LEISURE					
16.5	5	Acesite (Phils.) Hotel Corp.	8.9	9	8.9	9	1,416,000
4.25	1.8	Leisure and Resorts World Corp.	2.38	2.42	2.38	2.42	260,000
4.55	2.9	Philippine Racing Club Inc.	3.1	3.1	3.1	3.1	200,000
1.52	0.32	Premiere Entertainment Productions Inc.	1.44	1.5	1.36	1.42	24,477,000
1.2	0.55	Waterfront Philippines Inc.	0.88	0.88	0.88	0.88	950,000
		EDUCATION					
3.7	2.6	iPeople Inc.	3.2	3.2	3.2	3.2	36,000
		DIVERSIFIED SERVICES					
43	6.6	JTH Davies Holdings Inc.	43	43	27	30	126,900
6	2.04	Macroasia Corp.	4.8	4.8	4.7	4.8	365,000
17.25	9.8	Pacific Online Systems Corp.	11.25	11.25	11	11.25	326,500
30	6.2	Paxys Inc.	6.5	6.6	6.4	6.4	740,000
472.5	390	eTelecare Global Solutions Inc.	400	400	395	395	1,570
		MINING					
0.017	0.0085	Abra Mining and Industrial Corp.	0.01	0.011	0.01	0.011	40,800,000
7.2	3.6	Apex Mining Co. Inc. "A"	6.7	6.7	6.6	6.6	608,000
7.4	3.85	Apex Mining Co. Inc. "B"	7	7	6.9	6.9	20,000
21.25	8	Atlas Cons. Mining and Dev't Corp.	14.25	14.25	13.75	14	1,010,100
18	8.9	Benguet Corp. "A"	16	18	15.25	18	965,900
12.75	1.96	Dizon Copper Silver Mines Inc.	9.5	9.8	9.5	9.6	526,000
3.1	0.6	GEOGRACE Resources Philippines Inc.	2.12	2.18	2.08	2.12	74,469,000
0.56	0.18	Lepanto Consolidated Mining Co. "A"	0.55	0.55	0.53	0.54	111,500,000
0.61	0.22	Lepanto Consolidated Mining Co. "B"	0.59	0.6	0.57	0.58	63,190,000
0.038	0.017	Manila Mining Corp. "A"	0.029	0.029	0.028	0.029	141,200,000
0.041	0.02	Manila Mining Corp. "B"	0.032	0.032	0.032	0.032	1,300,000
30	3.6	NIHAO Minerals Resources Int'l Inc.	22.5	22.75	21.75	22	916,000
0.021	0.0088	Omico Corp.	0.014	0.014	0.014	0.014	223,800,000
0.015	0.007	Omico Corp.-Warrants	0.0095	0.0095	0.0095	0.0095	2,000,000
11.25	3.5	Philex Mining Corp.	9.9	9.9	9.6	9.8	3,218,000
1.36	0.55	United Paragon Mining Corp.	0.75	0.75	0.71	0.73	1,350,000
1.8	0.89	Vulcan Industrial and Mining Corp.	1.16	1.18	1.14	1.14	356,000
		OIL					
0.58	0.26	Basic Energy Corp.	0.34	0.34	0.33	0.33	920,000
0.029	0.01	Oriental Pet. and Minerals Corp. "A"	0.025	0.025	0.025	0.025	27,800,000
13.75	9	Petroenergy Resources Corp.	10.25	10.25	10	10	34,000
0.032	0.0095	The Philodrill Corp.	0.029	0.029	0.029	0.029	194,000,000

AVERAGES			VOLUME	VALUE
Financial	903.32 UP	12.23	16,974,890	801,391,290.00
Industrial	4,409.02 DOWN	52.25	85,240,800	917,457,340.00
Holding Firms	2,105.91 UP	14.61	408,705,490	[illegible]
Property	1,667.80 UP	11.08	250,624,800	873,920,115.00
Service	1,886.76 DOWN	0.87	189,248,430	1,237,008,875.00
Mining & Oil	8,691.78 DOWN	53.29	887,983,000	363,761,970.00
All Shares Index	2,273.63 UP	8.82		
PSEi	3,745.39 UP	11.43		
		GRAND TOTALS	1,838,777,410	4,756,767,640.00

COMPILED BY SCHATZI QUODALA INQUIRER RESEARCH

SOURCE: TECHNISTOCK, PSE

TeleTech to hire 10,000 more call center agents

By Ronnel W. Domingo

NASDAQ-LISTED TELETECH yesterday announced plans to hire 10,000 more call center agents as it is set to open up 10 new call centers across the nation within the next two years.

Maulik Parekh, TeleTech vice president and general manager for Asia, said in a briefing the move was being made as the company achieved a 15,000-strong workforce spread in 10 centers in Luzon and the Visayas.

"As far as we know, we are currently the biggest call center operations in the country," Parekh said. "That is, for those who are doing 'true' call center work; 95 percent of our deliveries are in voice-based services."

He said that even as the firm surpassed its target number of workers as of November, it would continue to hire and would take in at least 200 more people before yearend.

Also, Parekh said TeleTech would keep its strategy of locating in second-tier cities and that it had recently signed lease agreements with two parties.

"We are set to open a facility in SM City Pampanga in San Fernando City and another in Robinsons Sta. Rosa in Laguna, both in the first half of 2008," he said.

The official said the Pampanga center, which would be at the new wing of the mall, would have 1,700 seats while the one in Laguna would have 1,000 seats.

The Indian-born expatriate explained that TeleTech was continually looking for new sites and that the preference was areas far from existing call center hubs.

"We also look for locations where there is a high concentration of people," he said. "Six of our 10 existing centers are in shopping malls."

He was referring to call centers in Novaliches in Quezon City, Cainta in Rizal, Lipa City, Bacoor in Cavite, Bacolod City and Iloilo City.

The other four call centers are in Pasay City near the SM Mall of Asia, Bonifacio Global City in Taguig, Dumaguete City and Cebu City.

Gov't revenue effort surged as of Sept.

By Michelle V. Remo

THE GOVERNMENT'S REVENUE EFFORT IMproved in the first nine months of the year due mainly to the surge in privatization receipts.

Data from the Department of Finance showed that revenue effort as of September reached 17.2 percent, up from only 4.4 percent in the same period last year.

Revenue effort refers to total government revenues as a percentage of country's gross domestic product (GDP).

Revenue effort takes into account the taxes, fees and charges imposed by government agencies and proceeds from privatization.

Tax effort, on the other hand, only covers taxes and duties collected by the Bureau of Internal Revenue and the Bureau of Customs.

In the first nine months, total revenues hit P812.257 billion, equivalent to 17.2 percent of GDP during the period of P4.731 trillion.

Of the revenues, P682.975 billion came from taxes and duties while P129.154 billion was contributed by nontax revenues, such as fees and charges.

Privatization proceeds accounted for the balance of P42.393 billion.

Privatization proceeds during the period was P41.3 billion more than the P1.09 billion recorded last year.

This is due to more intensive efforts to sell state-owned assets.

The jump in privatization proceeds partly made up for the shortfall in the tax and duty collection of the BIR and BOC.

Assets sold this year include the government's 60-percent stake in PNOC-Energy Development Corp., 46-percent stake in Philippine Telecommunications Investment Corp. (PTIC), the Iloilo airport property and a minority stake in Philippine National Bank.

PNB-Allied . . .

From page B1

The Lucio Tan group, which controls 67 percent of PNB, has mandated ING as financial adviser for the merger of the two banks.

Mier said another financial adviser would have to be hired to negotiate valuation issues on behalf of minority stockholders.

PNB, which has a market capitalization of about P30 billion, has a public float of 33 percent (including a fund managed by investment bank UBS).

Allied Bank, on the other hand, is about 70-percent controlled by Tan while the rest is held by minority shareholders, Mier said.

As of end-September, PNB had assets of P233.76 billion while Allied Bank had P134.66 billion.

CLSA Securities head of research Alfred Dy said the forthcoming PNB-Allied merger would be a win-win situation and in line with the ongoing consolidation in the Philippine banking system.

Dy said the union would result in cost-synergies once the branch networks of the two banks were combined.

"On the marketing front, there will be more branches to support one brand," Dy said.

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Per DTI NCR permit #A3-1011 series of 2007. Promo valid from December 7, 2007 to January 30, 2008.

RP needs food aid due to natural calamities, UN agency says

By Amy R. Remo

THE UNITED NATIONS FOOD AND Agriculture Organization said the Philippines needs a localized food emergency assistance program, due to a spate of floods and landslides brought about by natural calamities.

In its latest Crop Prospects and Food Situation report, FAO said that along with countries like Vietnam and Nepal, the Philippines needs food aid.

Aside from the Philippines, the FAO report disclosed that 37 countries worldwide were currently facing food crises.

It added that increases in international prices have translated into higher retail prices of basic foods in many countries.

According to FAO, developing countries were the most affected by the food inflation since they depend heavily on imports to cover their cereal (or major staple) consumption requirements.

Meanwhile, low-income population groups are anticipated to bear the heaviest burden, because their daily energy intake depends more on cereal-based products and the share of food in their total expenditures is high, the report said.

Agriculture Secretary Arthur C. Yap earlier said the country needs to import at least 1 million metric tons next year to meet local requirements.

"There is no particular import figure yet but since we lack sufficient supply of rice, we have to import some 1 million to 1.5 million MT of rice," he said.

He also said that the country's population growth rate contributes to the need to import more rice every year.

Yap was happy to note though that in the past few years, import volume has not exceeded the 1.6 million-1.7 million MT range, even if the population has been increasing by at least 2 percent a year.

"This only means that local rice production is catching up with the country's requirements," Yap noted.

"Food security is critical. More than sufficiency, it is security. Accessible, affordable and available food is the mantra of the agriculture department," Yap said.

As a net buyer of rice in Asia, the Philippines imported 1.87 million metric tons this year, mostly from Vietnam.

Rice imports are intended to ensure sufficiency of the grain during the traditional lean production months of July to September.

Gross reserves fell to $32.46B in Nov.

Traders say there is no stopping rise of peso, now at 41.71

By Doris C. Dumlao

THE PHILIPPINES' FOREIGN RESERVES in November slightly fell to $32.46 billion from the record-high of $32.5 billion posted in October despite strong foreign exchange inflows ushering in the holidays, the Bangko Sentral ng Pilipinas reported yesterday.

"The month-on-month decline in the gross international reserves (GIR) level was attributed mainly to outflows arising from the Bangko Sentral's net foreign exchange operations and payments of maturing forex obligations of the national government and the BSP," BSP officer-in-charge Diwa Guinigundo said in a press statement.

Currency traders said the BSP had been heavily buying US dollars at the spot foreign exchange market to stem the peso's appreciation and to prevent pumping in excess pesos to the financial system, which could drive up inflation. Some of the dollar purchases are then locked up in foreign currency swap contracts instead of being placed in the GIR.

The GIR is a key indicator of a country's ability to cover the foreign exchange requirements of its economy. It consists of the central bank's gross foreign currency holdings, gold reserves, foreign investments and special drawing rights from multilateral institutions like the International Monetary Fund.

Guinigundo said the outflows in November were partly offset by the receipt of income from the BSP's investments abroad, as well as the deposit of the Power Sector Assets and Liabilities Management Corp. with the central bank. Proceeds from the sale of state assets under the government's privatization program form part of the PSALM's deposit.

At its current level, the GIR can cover 5.8 months of the country's imports of goods and payments of services and income.

It can also cover 5.5 times the country's short-term external debt based on original maturity, and 3.3 times the residual maturity.

Yesterday, the peso closed 41.71 at its strongest level since May 2000, on the back of strong remittances ahead of Christmas.

Currency traders said there was no stopping the rise of the peso.

"The peso will continue to gain against the US dollar through next year," Philippine Savings Bank president Pascual Garcia III said.

The local currency gained by another 14 centavos from Thursday's closing rate of 41.88 to the US dollar.

Yesterday's volume at the Philippine Dealing System, however, thinned to $306.5 million from $419.5 million on Thursday.

Survey: More jobs opened up in '05

By Michelle V. Remo

EMPLOYMENT IN THE MANUFACTURING sector registered an increase in 2005 from that in 2003, due to the opening of several establishments that year, according to the National Statistics Office's Survey of Philippine Business and Industry (ASPBI).

The survey, which was released by the NSO only last Wednesday, showed that there were 1,025,814 individuals employed in the manufacturing sector in 2005—up 3.9 percent from 986,921 in 2003.

The figures took into account the employees working in manufacturing firms with an employment base of 20.

The increase in employment in the manufacturing sector was consistent with the higher number of manufacturing firms registered in 2005. The increase in employment, however, was slower than the rise in the number of firms that opened.

WORKERS assemble micro motor fans for computers at the Sanyo Denki plant in Subic. In 2005, there were 136,223 people reported to be working in the electronics components industry alone. AFP

There were 6,554 manufacturing establishments that had at least 20 employees in 2005. This marked an 11.1-percent increase from the 5,901 recorded in 2003.

During the presentation of the ASPBI at Century Park Hotel in Manila, NSO Administration Carmelita Ericta said that the results of the survey confirmed statements from the government's economic managers that the Philippine economy was improving in terms of employment, corporate revenues and individual income.

She added that the manufacturing sector was one of the contributors to growth and higher employment in the overall economy.

The wearing apparel subsector employed the most number of workers in the manufacturing industry at 159,272, accounting for 15.5 percent of the total employees in the industry in 2005.

The food subsector ranked second, with 147,663 employees that accounted for 14.4 percent of the total.

The electronics components industry followed with 136,223 employees that accounted for 13.3 percent of the total.

The survey also revealed that the average annual income for every employee in the manufacturing sector stood at P163,748.

Of the subsectors of the manufacturing industry, the survey said, petroleum gave the highest compensation to its employees.

The average annual income of each worker in the petroleum subsector stood at P1,087,088 in 2005, much higher than the overall average for the manufacturing sector.

A far second was the transport equipment subsector, employees of which earned an average annual income of P355,669 in 2005.

Chemical products got the third spot, as its employees received an annual average income of P314,252.

ICTSI secures $250-M loan for expansion

By Riza T. Olchondra

LISTED PORT OPERATOR INTERNATIONAL Container Terminal Services Inc. (ICTSI) seems to be getting ready for expansion.

Its subsidiary, ICTSI Capital BV, has signed a $250-million revolving loan with a consortium of international banks.

The loan will be used to refinance various loans, "fund new acquisitions," and finance the general working capital requirement of the ICTSI group, the parent company said in a disclosure to the Philippine Stock Exchange.

The loan was arranged by Calyon, Citibank, N.A. Manila branch/Citigroup Global Markets Asia Ltd., The Hong Kong and Shanghai Banking Corp. Ltd., Australia and New Zealand Banking Group Ltd., Bank of China Ltd., CITIC Ka Wah Bank Ltd., First Commercial Bank, Mega International Commercial Bank Co. Ltd., Offshore Banking Branch, Mizuho Corporate Bank Ltd. and Sumitomo Mitsui Banking Corp.

The other lenders are DnB NOR Bank ASA, Singapore Branch, The Sumitomo Trust and Banking Company Ltd., Singapore Branch, The Bank of Tokyo-Mitsubishi UFJ, Ltd. Manila Branch, Maybank Philippines Inc., P.T. Bank Negara Indonesia (Persero) Tbk, Hong Kong Branch, P.T. Bank Negara Indonesia (Persero) Tbk, Singapore Branch, Societe Generale, Cathay United Bank, Chinatrust (Philippines) Commercial Bank Corp., Taiwan Business Bank, Offshore Banking Branch and The Shanghai Commercial and Savings Bank, Ltd. Offshore Banking Branch.

ICTSI Capital BV is a holding company incorporated in the Netherlands purposely to act as the borrower under the loan facility.

The parent company ICTSI also operates ports in Brazil, Poland, Madagascar, Ecuador, Colombia and Indonesia.

Energy officials tap SGV, UA&P to help monitor oil firms

By Abigail L. Ho

THE DEPARTMENT OF ENERGY HAS tapped Sycip, Gorres, Velayo and Co. Inc. and the University of Asia and the Pacific to help it monitor the finances of local oil firms, to ensure that they will not earn too much at the expense of motorists.

In a statement issued yesterday, Energy Secretary Angelo Reyes said SGV and UA&P would collect data on local oil firms' financial operations, to enable the government to adopt a realistic program to mitigate the impact of rising oil prices on local pump prices.

He said the data to be collected would be used to assess the impact of escalating world oil prices on the local economy.

Based on initial estimates, the impact of high oil prices on industry was placed at only 3 to 5 percent. The transport sector took a bigger blow, with rising prices slashing 25 to 30 percent from their gross income.

While tightening its watch over the oil firms, he said the DOE would continue to work with all stakeholders to cushion the impact of escalating world oil prices on local consumers.

Last month, oil refiners Petron Corp. and Pilipinas Shell Petroleum Corp. had committed to increase the number of stations offering diesel discounts to public utility vehicles from the existing 150 each to 300 stations each.

"Those 300 stations will be nationwide and not just in Metro Manila. We'll also look at providing gasoline discounts in some areas in the country," Shell country chair Edgar Chua had earlier said, responding to calls from public transport operators that use gasoline-fed vehicles.

Petron chair Nicasio Alcantara, for his part, said the oil firm would also expand its network of stations that offered autoLPG, or liquefied petroleum gas used as transport fuel.

From 16 stations with autoLPG dispensers, he said this number should go up in the coming months.

At current pump prices, autoLPG is priced P15-P16 a liter lower than regular gasoline.

BSP controls growth in money supply

THE BANGKO SENTRAL NG Pilipinas was able to control growth in the country's broad money supply despite strong inflows from overseas Filipinos and foreign investments.

Year-on-year growth in October came in at 11.4 percent—comparable to the figure recorded the previous month.

The growth was in line with the central bank's efforts to contain domestic liquidity (m3) below the 20 percent threshold, which is necessary to keep a benign inflation environment.

On a month-on-month basis, seasonally adjusted domestic liquidity grew by 1.7 percent in October, a reversal of the 1.1 percent decline in the previous month.

Domestic liquidity, or m3, is the broadest measure of money within an economy. It is used to estimate money in circulation, demand deposits, money market funds and short-term repurchase agreements. It is one of the indicators closely monitored by the BSP, which uses it in setting monetary policy.

Net foreign assets of depository corporations continued to drive the growth in liquidity, even as net foreign assets slowed down slightly to 29.7 percent year-on-year from 32.2 percent in September.

"The trend is associated with the continued foreign exchange inflows from overseas Filipino remittances, exports and direct and portfolio investments," BSP Officer-in-Charge Diwa Guinigundo said.

Meanwhile, net domestic assets declined for the third consecutive month, by 6 percent in October, as the net "other items" account—which includes the central bank's special deposit accounts (SDAs) and overnight borrowings—continued to reflect a negative balance after the BSP implemented mopping up measures in May.

The growth of credit to the public sector eased to 8.3 percent from 11.6 percent in September. Similarly, the growth of credit to the private sector softened to 4.8 percent from 8.5 percent the previous month, as other funding sources supplemented the credit extended by the banking system to the corporate sector.

"The BSP will continue to closely monitor developments in domestic liquidity to ensure that monetary policy is delivering price stability, which is conducive to a broad-based, durable and robust expansion of economic activity," Guinigundo said.

The central bank has mopped up excess liquidity more effectively since it transformed its high-yielding SDAs into a more powerful tool last May.

The BSP has turned to rely more on the SDAs than overnight borrowings.

Under the new rules, even banks' trust departments and non-bank state corporations can place funds with the SDAs and earn attractive interest rates.

GUINIGUNDO

The central bank has likewise made these instruments eligible as compliance to banks' 50-percent liquidity floor, or the portion of deposits and deposit substitutes required to be held as a buffer during bad times. *Doris C. Dumlao*

RP companies bag medical transcription deals in US

By Ronnel W. Domingo

THE MEDICAL TRANSCRIPTION sector has bagged $1.4 million (about P58.4 million) worth of deals with American clients in a single marketing sweep.

According to the Center for International Trade Expositions and Missions, a part of the Department of Trade and Industry, the recent mission to the American Health Information Management Association exhibition and conference in Philadelphia provided an opportunity to show large US companies that the Philippine sector is capable of handling US accounts and has enough headroom for future demand.

Ahima is a professional association that represents more than 51,000 specially educated health information management professionals who work throughout the US healthcare industry.

Industry projections show that Philippine annual revenues for transcription would be at 20 million lines—translating to $1.2 million—and 130,000 charts for medical coding, amounting to some $175,500.

According to the Medical Transcription Industry Association of the Philippines, demand for MT services would reach $301 million in 2010.

The increase would be driven by the rise in US healthcare spending because of its aging population, and increasing demand for health maintenance organizations.

Citem organized the Ahima mission, bringing over a group of MT firms that include ELink Transcription Academy Inc., E-Transcribe Global Transcription Services and Training Inc., GlobalQuest BPO Specialists Inc. and Rapid Data Services LLC.

Citem hinted that the domestic MT sector may undertake through Ahima a focused market study on global sourcing trends, best practices and outsourcing niches and opportunities.

People, Events & Products

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Editor Aries Espinosa

'Ready, set, RoRo!' 2007

MORE DESTINATIONS: MORE teams. More celebrities. More fun! This year's "Ready, Set, RoRo!" DBP Interisland Race by the Development Bank of the Philippines (DBP) promises to be more exciting and informative than its debut race, as it dashes through the country's major islands from Dec. 11 to 15.

"With the success enjoyed by the inaugural race held last year, we have prepared a more far-reaching setting for our 2007 participants, covering additional areas and taking a Mindanao to Manila route," explained DBP President and CEO Reynaldo G. David.

This year's race shall kick-off Dec. 11 in Cagayan de Oro, signaling the start of a grueling 1,157-km land and sea (via RoRo) adventure across 10 more key RoRo destinations before the touchdown finish at The Fort Bonifacio High Street in Taguig.

10 teams composed of one celebrity and two non-celebrity participants will be subjected to numerous physical and mental challenges about the RoRo, the key cities/islands they will be visiting, and even these different provinces' specialty products.

Among the celebrities who are all revved-up and ready to go include: Pinoy Big Brother's Nene Tamayo and Chx Alcala; hunks Ryan Eigenmann and Brad Turvey; along with strong-willed damsels Alyssa Alano and Jackie Rivas.

"We are pleased with the expected turnout in participation for this year's race which almost doubled in number. This means more people have become aware, have experienced, or are simply raring at a chance to experience how convenient, cost-effective, and enjoyable maximizing the RoRo could be," David said.

Whether you are a foreign or local tourist interested in exploring the archipelago's different islands with your family and friends without the unnecessary extra expenses, or a businessman interested in transporting your goods and products at a lower cost; then the Roll-on/Roll-off (RoRo) ferries under the improved Strong Republic Nautical Highway project is the answer to all your prayers.

"One of the best things about the RoRo is the opportunity it presents to our *kababayans*, and tourists as well, that it is possible to gracefully mix tourism and commerce... and this is exactly what the DBP Interisland Race illustrates," David pointed out.

So, who will take Jao Mapa and Blue Team-South's crown as champions for this year's "Ready, Set, RoRo!" DBP Interisland Race? Be sure to take part and have this event on check from a RoRo route nearest you to find out!

For more information and inquiries about the "Ready, Set, RORO!" DBP Interisland Race Year 2, call 638-9478, e-mail dbprace@beginnings.com.ph, or log on to www.dbp-readysetroro.com.

PANASONIC MANUFACTURING PHILIPPINES AT 40

Panasonic Manufacturing Philippines Corp (PMPC) recently marked its 40th anniversary, and part of its celebration was the unveiling of the statue of PMPC's founding chair Jesus V. Del Rosario. Shown are the members of PMPC top management led by PMPC president Reynaldo S. Lico and some selected business partners. The chair of the board of the Del Rosario Group of Companies Jaime C. Del Rosario graced the occasion. Established in 1967 through the pioneering pursuit of Jesus V. Del Rosario, PMPC is the first Filipino-Japanese joint venture operation in the area of consumer electronics in the Philippines.

A gem of an events place in Greenbelt

EMERGING AS THE HOTTEST BAR in Greenbelt, Tropezz is the favorite venue for chic private and corporate parties in Greenbelt 3, Makati City. Large enough to house 250 people, Tropezz boasts of a built-in state-of-the-art sound and lights system and reasonably priced and mouth-watering international cuisine.

The venue of choice of many exclusive gatherings, the inherent advantage at Tropezz is the built-in sound and acoustic system and the well-chosen entertainment grid provided by Dotcelebrations. Each celebration in Tropezz is a success-great food, great drinks, outstanding music.

Located right in the middle of Greenbelt, across the park, the place has hosted almost all the big events-the launch of Europcar with Cebu Pacific, the celebration of Globe, the Cathayland recognition, Chevron , Jam 88.3, The Imelda Collections, Wyeth party, the relaunch of Studio 23, Voice of McDonald's, to name a few.

"A perfect events place, we make it easy for the clients. It is so convenient to simply allow the staff of Tropezz to help coordinate the food, the band, the sound system and all the client has to do is relax and have fun", said Jiji Fernandez, owner of Tropezz.

Although the name evokes a French feel, Tropezz actually serves Philippine and Mediterranean fusion .Whimsically referred to as "international islands" cuisine, the food is really nothing exotic.

"We wanted to have a little of everything-Chinese, Thai, Filipino, French, Spanish and American. At the same time, we were careful not to duplicate anything that other restaurants in the area already offer," adds Isa Pacual.

The gourmet cuisine is evident in the menu which has scored early bestsellers. Belly mucho is slow roast pork belly glazed with mandarin orange and hoisin sauce, served with parsley rice. Crab attack is crab meat marinated in curry powder mixed with thick béchamel, rolled, breaded and deep fried. Connecting flight is chicken wings cooked in classic adobo, deep-fried and glazed with minced chicken liver.

Diners will also love Tropezz house specialties Fish Out of Water (native kinilaw in coconut milk), Caviar de Ifugao (paté of tinapa with cream cheese and butter), Ravioli Bicolana (Italian-inspired laing), Marina Haponesa (smoked bangus belly with eggplant and orange-laced teriyaki sauce), Linguine de Adobo (pasta in Carbonara sauce topped with classic chicken adobo).

The servings are generous. The pasta and salad dishes can be shared by two people. For desserts, pastry chef Kat Pascual has runaway sweets with her halo-halo cheesecake and flourless chocolate cake.

This early, Tropezz has become a favorite haunt in the Makati area for those who want to satisfy their culinary cravings and musical moods. The restaurant opens its doors as early as 11 a.m. to cater to the Makati lunch crowd, and unlike its neighbors, does not close until 2 a.m. Business is from Mondays to Sundays until 1 a.m.

Cilostazol in PAD and stroke management

PERIPHERAL ARTERIAL DISEASE (PAD) and stroke have a few things in common-both are causes of death and disability, both are due to blocked arteries and the antiplatelet medicine cilostazol (Pletaal) can help prevent both illnesses.

Antiplatelets are drugs used to prevent blood clots from forming, the latter which can lead to heart attack, stroke and PAD complications such as leg gangrene. Cilostazol is a blood thinning drug that prevents blood clotting which may cause plaque build-ups within the arteries. It is one of the treatments prescribed by doctors for PAD and prevention of stroke.

"As well as the disability created by PAD, it can sometimes be an early warning of potential heart disease or stroke," said Dr. Simon Green from the Queensland University of Technology School of Human Movement Studies.

PAD is a disease caused by blocked blood vessels in the limb areas (arms and legs). It causes leg cramps or pain during mobility. And when severe, becomes disabling.

Just like PAD, stroke is also caused by blocked blood vessels but in another area - the brain. Limited blood circulation in the brain leads to inadequate supply of oxygen. When this happens, it may cause complications such as paralysis with or without lifetime disability.

Health experts are alarmed that not enough information regarding stroke or PAD preventions are disseminated. "It is disturbing that so many people do not understand that many strokes can be prevented. There are a number of risk factors that can be controlled to reduce the chances of stroke," said Dr. Erin Lalor from the National Stroke Foundation.

Blood thinning agents like cilostazol can be used for the preventive treatment of stroke. The Cilostazol Stroke Prevention Study (CSPS), a clinical trial involving 1,000 prior stroke patients, found that patients who were given cilostazol had a 41.7-percent risk-reduction of developing another stroke, compared to patients on placebo.

Patients should be relieved of the disabling PAD symptoms and should be protected from risk of secondary stroke. Experience with Cilostazol (Pletaal) as an antiplatelet is supported by evidence-based trials for more than 10 years. It is the innovator that provides trusted and proven efficacy and long-term safety compared to other generic equivalents.

For information on PAD and stroke issues and prevention, call the customer hotline at 811-4723 for GMA/Metro Manila or 1-800-1888-4723 for provincial calls.

'PAMILYANG ALASKA' FULL FORCE IN NEW DESIGN

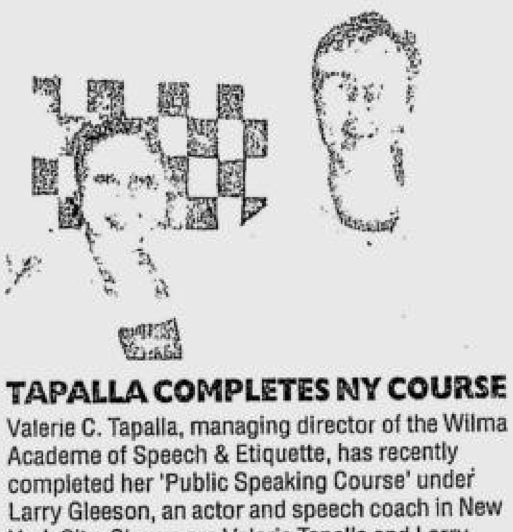
Officials of Alaska Milk Corp and Robinsons Supermarket, as partners, came out in full force in support of the unveiling of the new packaging design for Alaska Powdered Filled Milk at the newly renovated Robinsons Galleria Supermarket last August. 'Diamond Star' and brand endorser of Alaska Powdered Filled Milk Maricel Soriano, together with the general manager of Robinsons Supermarket Jody Gadia, and senior vice president and group general manager of Robinsons retail group Robina Gokongwei-Pe, did the honors of unveiling the giant replica of the new Alaska Powdered Filled Milk. Soriano also toured the new Robinsons Galleria Supermarket, chatting with shoppers about the new look of Alaska Powdered Milk. Fans of Soriano and mall-goers were, likewise, treated to autograph-signing and picture-taking with the star. The product now comes in a more colorful and attractive packaging that better exemplifies what Alaska Powdered Filled Milk is to the Filipino family. Shown, from left, during the unveiling, are Robina Gokongwei-Pe, Mark Tansiongkun, Bim Sebastian, Rocel Cahilig, Ruby Alex, and Ronnie Ong with the Alaska Family, Maricel Soriano, and Bien Fernando

MCDONALD'S RENEWS PARTNERSHIP WITH WSI

A fun-filled Christmas experience filled with your favorite food treats looms near as Worldbex Services International (WSI) recently tied up with McDonald's for the 7th World Bazaar Festival, ongoing from Dec. 6 to 16 at the World Trade Center. Stuff yourself with delicious delights from McDonald's as you splurge your way to the biggest and most exciting shopping galore ever. Shown are (from left) Koi Castillo, MRM supervisor, and Jill Althnie Ang, WSI managing director. For more information, call WSI at 531-6350/74 or 534-3615, fax 533-2026 or e-mail info@worldbex.com.

PHRS launches travel website

PHILIPPINE HOTEL RESERVATIONS SERVICE, the country's first and only central hotel reservations hotline, just launched its new website with the most complete and comprehensive information about the Philippines as a premiér tourist destination. The website features 13 major locations informing guests on where to go, what to see and where to stay! The Hotel Directory lists specific hotel information, room types and rates at over 400 hotels in Cebu, Boracay, Palawan, Bohol, Baguio, and many more....depending on the guest's preferred location and budget. The website is perfect for local travelers who tend to travel in bigger groups as the site can offer hotels that can accommodate any group size. Even corporate or business travelers will love the quick and easy search buttons and hotel pop-ups for their every travel destination. Other great features on the site include a live chat room, where guests can chat online with an expert travel consultant; a travel story section where one can read travel related articles and stories; and a travel forum section where guests can post general or specific questions or post own experiences to share with others. Experience and enjoy the beauty and nature of the Philippines. See it for yourself! Visit www.philippinehotelreservations.com. Or call hotline 812-PHRS (7477).



TAPALLA COMPLETES NY COURSE

Valerie C. Tapalla, managing director of the Wilma Academe of Speech & Etiquette, has recently completed her 'Public Speaking Course' under Larry Gleeson, an actor and speech coach in New York City. Shown are Valerie Tapalla and Larry Gleeson during a break in their class at the Embassy Suites Hotel at Battery Park, New York City.

Verzio introduces world's 1st 3G dual SIM handset in RP

REGIONAL 3C BRAND AND Singapore-based Verzio introduces Duplii (the world's first 3G tri-band dual SIM handset in the Philippines) and Twinn (the world's first EDGE/E-GPRS tri-band dual SIM handset).

Equipped with 3G and tri-band capabilities, the Duplii enables video calls and conferencing, high-speed data access and multimedia streaming.

Duplii also has both QualComm and Philips NXP processors, which are long-life platforms designed for minimal power consumption. It comes with an FM radio and a real value 2-megapixel camera. The handset is capable of PC Sync, allowing full data synchronization, including contacts.

Besides the EDGE/E-GPRS and tri-band features, the Twinn is the first dual SIM slider phone in the market. It is also compact in size and offers touch screen functionality. It has a real value 1.3-megapixel camera and uses a Philips NXP processor.

Haldane vice president and general manager Chris Uyco cites that Verzio handset users can now enjoy the convenience of transferring their contact list via PC Sync or via Bluetooth. Both models can each contain 1,000 names and up to 3,000 numbers. Haldane Philippines is the authorized distributor of Verzio products, which currently distributes O2, Sony Ericsson, Canon, and BenQ in the country.

Solving the holiday binge for overweight, obese patients

By Charles E. Buban

THE SEASON TO feast with family and friends is Yuletide, an excusable time to consume mountains of calories and hope that this time around, the resolution to lose the excess weight gained during the holidays be kept.

"But as always, it's hard to stick to a New Year's resolution and that includes shedding off that holiday weight," said Dr. Ferdinand Samonte, one of the country's leading bariatric surgeon (specializing in various surgical procedures to treat obesity) and main proponent of Lap-Band surgery and BIB placement.

But Samonte clarified that being overweight and obese is not always simply a result of overindulgence in highly palatable foods or of a lack of physical activity.

"Biological factors (like hormones and genetics), stress, drugs and aging also play a role. However, dietary factors and physical activity patterns strongly influence the energy balance equation (when people eat more calories than they burn off, their bodies store the extra calories as fat) and they are also the major modifiable factors," Samonte explained.

SAMONTE is with one of his patients, Helene Gillemont of Belgium.

Many, varied consequences

He added that the health consequences of being overweight and obese are many and varied.

In fact, even moderate weight excess of 4.5 to 9 kg for a person of average height increases the risk of death, particularly among adults aged 30 to 64 years.

Moreover, individuals who are obese have a 50 to 100 percent increased risk of premature death from all causes, compared to individuals with a healthy weight.

"Raised body mass index is a major risk factor for chronic diseases such as cardiovascular disease (mainly heart disease and stroke), Type 2 diabetes, osteoarthritis and even some forms of cancers (endometrial, breast and colon)," Samonte reported.

Stigmatized

He also added that even without the disease risks, an overweight or obese person is more likely to be stigmatized as they are being perceived to have undesirable bodily appearance or even character (being lazy, dirty).

This is why, Samonte said, obese or even overweight patients should be treated seriously.

Approved by the United States Food and Drug Administration in 2001, Lap-Band surgery is considered the safest and least invasive bariatric surgery for weight-loss patients.

"The Lap-Band is a small, inflatable belt placed around the upper portion of the patient's stomach that functions to restrict the amount of food consumed, slow the emptying of food from the stomach, and provide a constant sensation of being 'full.' Operating time is less than an hour and most patients are ready to leave the hospital the following day," Samonte explained.

Strict diet

He explained that as with all surgical weight-loss programs, it is imperative that Lap-Band patients adhere to a strict postoperative diet.

"After surgery, patients must restrict themselves to consuming less calories per day (to be determined by a nutritionist or dietician). On average, patients who undergo LapBand surgery experience a 60 percent loss of excess weight," Samonte reported.

Among the good things about the LapBand, Samonte said, is that this type of surgery doesn't restrict the patient from eating many of the food that he or she likes. "The only thing you have to watch are the empty calories meaning food that are not nutritious but contain a lot of calories such as junk food," he said.

Samonte added that since a number of obese or even overweight patients would consider their case as sensitive his patients usually see him at his clinic in De Los Santos Medical Center in Quezon City or at the BIB and Lap-Band Center (21/F Medical Plaza Makati) in Legaspi Village Makati City.

"Aside from the expertise that patients demand from their doctor as well as the completeness and safety of the facility, Lap-Band surgery patients highly appreciate the utmost privacy that these two locations provide," Samonte said.

Cutting-edge magnets

EUREKA!

Queena N. Lee-Chua

WE HAVE MAGNETIC ENCOUNTERS every day, literally. Kitchen gadgets, credit cards, TV sets and various car parts all contain magnets. From the added ease of replacing screws using a magnetic screwdriver to the huge advances in transportation such as levitating trains, magnets have certainly made a lot of things more convenient.

However, magnetism is anything but simple. A thorough understanding requires a grasp of quantum mechanics, and many scientists still have a lot to learn about the pieces of metal that stick to our fridge door. Arlene Clarice Tan of the Ateneo de Manila University Chemistry Department enlightens us here.

Basically, magnetic fields are generated by moving charged particles, specifically electrons that orbit around atoms and spin on their individual axes. When the magnetic fields of these electrons align and add up, the atoms and therefore, the materials become magnetic as well. This is why iron, cobalt and many other metals are magnetic.

New class of magnets

However, an emerging class of magnets has caught the attention of scientists and engineers all over the world because of their new properties. Unlike conventional magnets made of metals, these magnetic materials, known as molecular magnets, are made from organic and inorganic molecules, which according to scientific laws should not be magnetic at all.

NOBEL prize winning chemist Michel Verdaguer

Scientists are excited because they can now create lightweight, transparent and possibly biocompatible magnets, which they cannot do with ordinary metallic magnets. For example, these magnets from polymers can be used in space programs and other areas where weight is an issue. Biocompatible magnets can be used in medical imaging. Single-molecule magnets can be used in miniature electronic devices and are expected to revolutionize information storage.

Since the discovery of the first ferromagnetic molecule in 1986, tremendous progress has been made. But much is yet to be understood about why these materials behave as they do and studies have yet to be done before commercial applications can be perfected. The discovery of the existence of these materials is one thing. The design and tailoring of properties to suit various demands is another. Still, the possibilities have motivated scientists across the globe to come together to better understand this new class of magnets.

Magnetic pioneer visits RP

Michel Verdaguer, a French chemist, is one of the individuals who have taken a passionate interest in molecular magnets. An emeritus professor at the Université Pierre et Marie Curie in Paris, Verdaguer holds credit for much of the progress in the field.

He is committed to establishing European coordination through the Molecular Magnets Program of the European Science Foundation and to lecturing worldwide on molecular magnetism. He holds awards from the Spanish and French chemical societies and from the French Academy of Sciences.

In January, Michel will visit the Philippines to talk more about his work at the Tenth Eurasia Conference on Chemical Sciences. For more information, go to http://eurasiachem10.philippinechem.org or e-mail eurasiachem10@yahoo.com.

Peanut shells for the seas

DISCOVER

Massie Santos Ballon

STEAMED PEANUTS ARE A fairly inexpensive and easy-to-eat snack available from various vendors on the street. Their popularity is evidenced by the shells that litter the ground.

A recent study suggests that those same discarded peanut shells could help protect the environment, if they were dumped somewhere else.

In the current issue of the International Journal of Environment and Pollution, researchers from Mersin University in Turkey report that ground-up, untreated peanut shells can effectively remove copper ions from wastewater that might come from companies like fertilizer producers and metal-plating facilities. The low-cost process using these natural by-products could be used to reduce heavy metal concentrations in these waters before they flow into rivers, lakes and oceans.

Pollute air, water

Though the Philippines has long been considered a country rich in mineral resources like gold, nickel and copper resources, extracting these ores has not been without incident. Several studies done on the coral reefs off Marinduque since large quantities of Marcopper mine tailings or residues spilled into the Boac River back in 1996, for example, have linked the run-offs to changing levels of heavy metal concentrations in the corals. Residents near mines in Albay, Marinduque and Negros Occidental have also complained that the tailings from these sites pollute the air and water around them.

Multivitamin labels indicate that copper is a trace element needed by the body; exposure to high concentrations of the heavy metal can be hazardous to human health, damaging the liver and kidneys. Sponge-like substances called adsorbers pull other substances can remove heavy metals from the wastewater, but the treatments are expensive and require special facilities.

Low-cost methods

Together with her colleagues, graduate student H. Dugyu Ozsoy and the study's lead author, looked for low-cost methods of removing the heavy metal residues from the water, using either something abundant and naturally-occurring or already a waste product from another process.

Based on previous studies suggesting that agricultural byproducts such as banana pith and pine tree bark, Ozsoy's team chose to examine the properties of sawdust from the Turkish pine and peanut shells.

To test the materials for adsorption efficiency, the researchers collected raw peanut shells, washed them in distilled water, and then dried them in an oven set at low heat to make sure all the moisture had been removed. The shells were then ground and then placed in flasks containing copper solutions.

Series of tests

The researchers then conducted a series of tests using equal amounts of sawdust and ground shells to determine the best conditions under which each adsorber would work best. Temperature variations, for example, made very little difference to the adsorption rates, though the peanut shells adsorbed the heavy metals more efficiently if the solution was slightly acidic.

Ozsoy's group also found that within 24 hours of contact, the peanut shells could adsorb as much as 80 percent of the copper ions in solution, approximately four times the amount adsorbed by the sawdust in the same time period. When the period of contact was extended to a week, they found that 95 percent of the copper ions in solution were adsorbed by the peanut shells, compared to just 45 percent for the sawdust.

If these numbers can be replicated in large-scale use, the process could serve as an effective first step in treating wastewater laced with heavy copper residue concentrations, reducing the damage these residues can do both to marine ecosystems and human health.

E-mail the author at massie@massie.com.

SCISCOPE

Pain medicine fellowship at St. Luke's

THE ST. LUKE'S MEDICAL CENTER PAIN Management Center has announced that Fellowship in Pain Medicine (January 2008 to December 2009) is open for application.

Those who have finished and passed the written examinations for Anesthesiology, Rehabilitation Medicine, Family Medicine, Psychiatry and Neurology are welcome to apply.

Pain medicine is a new subspecialty that deals with the problem of intractable pain (acute, chronic, cancer-related and noncancer related).

Accepted fellows have rotations to Singapore or Australia for palliative care and Memorial Sloan Kettering Cancer in New York during their two-year fellowship.

For inquiries, please call Maria Fe G. Concensino at 727-5416 or 723-0101 local 4403 or 5416.

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New hope for the elderly with blurred vision

By Tess S. Samaniego

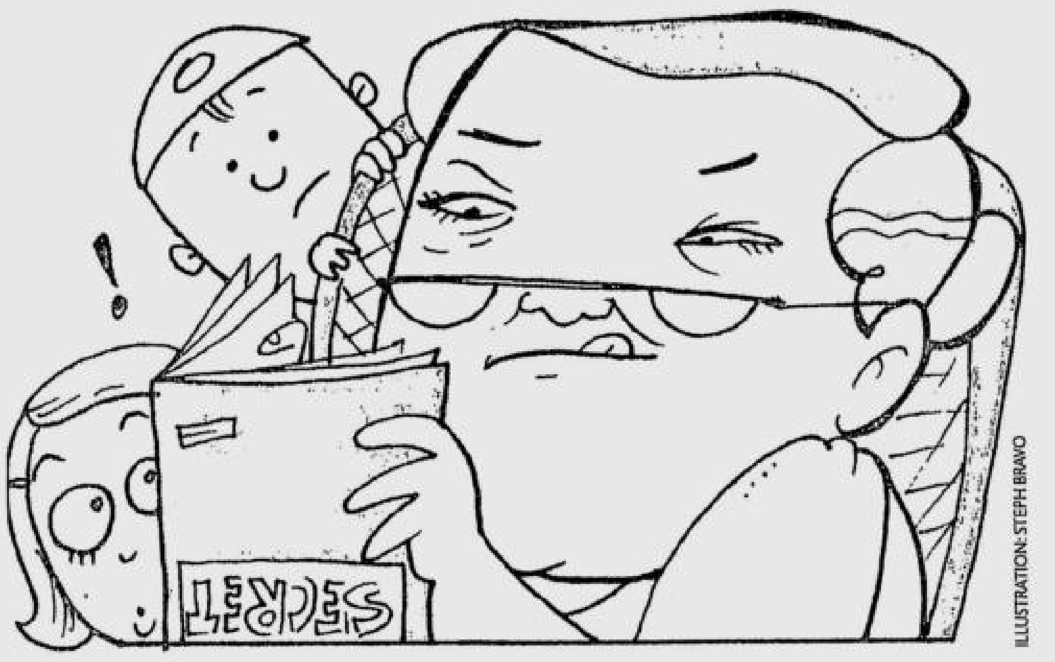

ILLUSTRATION: STEPH BRAVO

LIKE MOST PEOPLE HER age, 73-year-old Norminda Daño values building memories with her family. But sharing these memories have become more increasingly difficult when she noticed that her vision was becoming blurry.

In a footage shown to the media Daño says, "I thought my blurred vision was a natural part of aging. But I noticed it wasn't normal. For instance, every time I watch my favorite teleserye, there was always a black spot in the center of the television."

Daño is just one among the many elderly individuals suffering from age-related macular degeneration (AMD), a degenerative eye disease associated with aging.

AMD gradually destroys the macula, the central part of the retina at the back of the eye, which is responsible for the "straight ahead" central vision necessary for identifying faces and doing everyday activities like reading, driving and sewing.

Leading cause

According to the World Health Organization (WHO), AMD is now the leading cause of severe loss of vision in people over the age of 50 in Western countries.

It is more likely to cause vision loss than glaucoma, cataract, or diabetic retinopathy. To date, an estimated 25 to 30 million people worldwide are affected by AMD.

"In the Philippines more than half of the population aged 70-80 is afflicted with AMD while some 5 percent of people aged 50 is diagnosed to have AMD," says Dr. Harvey Uy of the Asian Eye Institute in an interview with the INQUIRER.

There are even a few cases of AMD incidence reported among young people, he adds.

2 forms

Uy explains that AMD comes in two forms—wet, which accounts for the majority of vision loss among Asians; and dry, which is more common and accounts for 85 percent of all reported AMD cases worldwide.

Dry AMD, he explains, is characterized by the presence of drusen (dots of yellow crystalline deposits that develop within the macula) and thinning of the macula.

While not as severe as the wet form, dry AMD reduces central vision, affects color perception and can cause profound vision loss over time.

Meanwhile, wet AMD is associated with the growth of pathological new vessels in the macula. These vessels are fragile and leak fluid and blood, leading to the development of edema (excessive fluid accumulation in tissues).

Typically, a blind spot (scotoma) develops and causes a decrease in central vision.

Generally, AMD symptoms include distortion of objects and lines, blurring and reduced visual acuity, decreased color vision, increased glare sensitivity, and the development of scotoma or a dark spot in the center of a visual field surrounded by a distorted image.

As a result, patients lose the ability to perform everyday activities independently, which may affect their emotional stability. People with AMD reportedly feel anxious and depressed and become suddenly more dependent on caregivers.

For many years, no drug has been available for specific treatment of AMD. Until now, available wet AMD therapies could only slow down the decline of vision loss.

Clinically proven

But with the breakthrough medicine introduced by Novartis, patients with AMD no longer have to endure the debilitating effects of AMD.

Ranibizumab, administered through intravitreal injection, is a clinically proven drug that effectively improves vision and promises to restore their hope to achieve quality of life.

As proven by clinical trials, Novartis claims that Ranibizumab improves vision and vision-related quality of life in a significant number of people suffering from wet AMD.

It is a therapeutic antibody fragment designed for treating conditions of the eye, blocking all known biologically active forms of vascular endothelial cell growth factor A (VEGF-A), the molecule believed to be the major cause of wet AMD.

Ranibizumab penetrates all layers of the retina to reach the site where blood vessels are being formed.

Renewed sense of well-being

In the two recent studies conducted testing the efficacy of the drug, patients administered with Ranibizumab gained vision and the ability to do ordinary day-to-day activities such as reading and shopping.

More important, patients also experienced a renewed sense of well-being.

To date, Daño is among the blessed patients who have experienced the efficacy of Ranibizumab. She started her treatments last July but has already experienced significant improvements in her vision.

For people who experience sudden blurring of vision, Uy recommends that they consult their eye doctor right away to determine if it is AMD.

He adds that when AMD is detected early, severe loss of vision can be avoided.

RP's first pediatric laser vision correction done at St. Luke's

CAREPLUS

Christine F. Liwanag

AT FIRST GLANCE, 4-YEAR-old Michael looks just like any other boy his age, full of energy and constantly at play. But all is not well with Michael.

Because he was a preterm baby, Michael developed a condition called retinopathy of prematurity or ROP. In premature babies, the growth of the blood vessels supplying the retina may stop for a period of time. When blood vessel growth resumes, it occurs in a rapid, disorganized fashion in which small blood vessels leak and eventually lead to scarring. In very severe cases, the ultimate result may be detachment of the retina from the back of the eye and loss of vision.

Although Michael's ROP did not progress to the severe form—thanks to timely medical care—he developed a serious eye condition called anisometropic myopic amblyopia, explains Dr. Ruben Lim Bon Siong, head of St. Luke's International Eye Institute-Vision Laser Center. "His right eye was severely nearsighted while his left eye was normal."

Clear vision

According to Dr. Lim Bon Siong, no one is born with perfect vision. "Vision, which is a function of both the eye and the brain, develops from birth until around the age of 8." For this process to proceed normally, the noted ophthalmologist says both eyes should have the capacity to perceive images clearly. If only one eye has clear vision, the part of the brain controlling the good eye will develop faster and leave the other eye behind in terms of development, a condition commonly known as "lazy eye." "This condition usually becomes irreversible if not treated properly prior to age 8."

Although a person can function adequately with just one eye, he or she will not be able to see the world in three dimensions, curtailing his or her options for a career where depth perception is critical. A standard and effective way to help the bad eye develop is by patching the good eye. In effect, this gives the bad eye a chance to "catch up" with the other eye. This, however, is easier said than done. For this treatment to work, strict compliance with the patching regimen is required, which is not always possible with a very active boy like Michael.

'Special' cure protocol

Dr. Pauline Santiago, a pediatric ophthalmologist of St. Luke's Medical Center, has been taking care of Michael from the start. Since all other conventional measures have failed, Doctors Santiago and Lim Bon Siong developed a "special" treatment protocol to help Michael see better.

Laser vision correction, in the form of Lasik and PRK, is standard treatment for people 18 years old and above with errors of refraction. To perform laser vision correction in a 4-year-old boy, however, requires substantial technical resources and expertise only a hospital like St. Luke's can provide.

Pediatric PRK is an off-label use of the excimer laser technology performed only at very few eye centers around the world and, as far as St. Luke's records show, has yet to be done in Southeast Asia. The procedure aims to eliminate the nearsightedness of Michael's right eye, equalize its visual acuity with his left eye, and eliminate the need for patching. This will ultimately lead to the normal development of Michael's right eye.

First pediatric PRK

On Sept. 5, 2007, Dr. Lim Bon Siong performed the country's first pediatric PRK on Michael using the Technolas 217Z at St. Luke's Vision Laser Center. He was ably assisted by Dr. Winston Villar and the anesthesiology team of Doctors Edwina Cua and Joy Luat-Inciong. Because of his young age, Michael had to be sedated for the 5-minute procedure.

With his vision improving progressively, Michael can almost see the day when his dream of becoming a top gun Air Force pilot finally becomes reality.

For feedback, please e-mail the Healthcare Technology and Outcomes Information Bureau at inquire@htoib.com.

DR. Ruben Lim Bon Siong, head of the St. Luke's International Eye Institute-Vision Laser Center, is performing the country's first pediatric laser vision correction on 4-year-old Michael. He is ably assisted by ophthalmologist Dr. Winston Villar and anesthesiologists Doctors Edwina Cua and Joy Luat-Inciong.

HOSPITAL ART

The colors of hope and a new life

ALL IT TOOK FOR JOHN FEIGHT, AN AD executive based in New York and Atlanta, to turn his life around was a single tug from a badly burned little girl's hand telling him that she wanted to paint.

This moving episode in his life, while he was volunteering in a hospital, left such a dramatic imprint on Feight that he was inspired to form a nonprofit foundation dedicated to making hospitals a happier place for sick people and their loved ones.

For the last three decades, Feight has happily made it his crusade to uplift the souls of sick patients through his Foundation for Hospital Art, dedicated to softening the hospital environment with colorful paintings, wall murals and ceiling tiles. Participants paint pre-drawn, color-coded designs at Paintfests held in a variety of settings around the world. The artwork is touched up and then donated to needy hospitals on behalf of the sponsor.

Hospital art beneficiary

Carolina "Chula" Ramos-Sembrano, the third daughter of former President Fidel V. Ramos, was one of the beneficiaries of hospital art.

"Four years ago, my sister suffered from severe traumatic brain injury because of an accident. This left her barely able to talk and was fed through the stomach," recalls Chula's sister, Angel Ramos

Chula suffered from a short-term memory loss because of the tragedy, not being able to recognize her husband and kids. She was neither functional at all, not being able to control her movements and behavior that made her highly dependent on her family's support.

In 2005, Chula was sent by the family to a neuro-behavioral facility in Atlanta, Georgia, to help in her recovery. It was there that Chula got involved in weekly painting sessions being organized by the Foundation for Hospital Art.

"Chula joined in the painting sessions along with recovering drug addicts and homeless people," Ramos says.

As she progressed with this therapeutic activity for more than a year as part of her rehabilitation and recovery, Chula got better and better each day. By then, she is now able to perform functional activities she was not able to do before, like speaking, swallowing and becoming more in control of her actions.

In an essay titled "The Arts of Healing" written by M. J. Friedrich of the Journal of the American Medical Association (Jama), in 1999, the author proposed that representational nature art was shown to have a beneficial effect on patients experiencing stress and anxiety.

"Psychologically appropriate art substantially affects such patient outcomes as high blood pressure, anxiety, intake of pain medication, and length of hospital stay," the author wrote.

"When patients paint, they just think about what they are painting and not their illness. People who do art, feel half the pain and get out of the hospital in half the time," Feight shares, adding that they have already done over 30,000 paintings for 1,500 hospitals in 179 countries.

Amazing recovery

Seeing how the activity was a good therapeutic experience for Chula, Angel thought of bringing it to the Philippines so her sister may continue to do it as part of her therapy, and at the same time share the experience with other patients needing therapy.

Angel kept in touch with Feight who welcomed the idea of bringing the activities of the foundation to the Philippines. Recently, she coordinated a Paintfest held at the AFP Medical Center in Quezon City with the aid of a sponsor from the United States.

She also broached the idea to their very good family friend, salon czar Ricky Reyes, who is known to have a long-running tie with the Philippine General Hospital, particularly with the pediatric department of the Cancer Institute. For nine years now, Ricky has been supporting Munting Paraiso, a playroom haven for children sick with cancer that primarily provides for the psychosocial and financial needs of sick, indigent kids.

Their collaborative efforts have resulted to "Kulay Pag-asa, Chula's Place Artistic Therapy Center," which will provide art therapy through hospital art to patients suffering from traumatic brain injury, memory loss, Alzheimer's disease, as well as to other patients who may want to avail of the therapeutic activity. Kulay Pag-asa will open at the Rehabilitation facility at the PGH by November through a memorandum of agreement with PGH director Dr. Mike Alfiler and Cancer Institute Chair Dr. Cecilia Llave.

"Chula's story inspired me to bring this beautiful way of healing in the country. Art can definitely change the way patients view their situation as not a sad experience but a hopeful one," Ricky shares.

Just too glad

Feight is just too glad that what he started has already reached the Philippines. Throwing his all-out support behind Kulay Pag-asa, he and his wife Linda were recently in the country to grace the launch of the program which coincided with the ninth anniversary of Munting Paraiso at the PGH.

Kulay Pag-asa however is being taken a step further by involving other Filipino artists to contribute and help propagate the concept.

"We are now working on the involvement of well-known painters in the country and the UP College of Fine Arts to donate their artworks that convey a happy mood which patients can replicate by painting through numbers, so they can easily follow," Ricky explains.

The works of the patients will be auctioned so it can even become a source of livelihood and provide funds for the project.

Everyone involved in Kulay Pag-asa is in high hopes of the center's huge potential to change lives. Chula's amazing recovery has been a shining example.

"I hope that the center can help the patients in PGH in the same way as it was able to help Chula in her recovery, because if Chula can, surely others can. And that with every brush stroke the patients apply in their works of art, the colors of hope spring to life and they will be able to forget all their troubles and illnesses and aid in their speedy recovery," Ricky ends.

Kul
Pag-asa
Chula's Place
THERAPY CENTER

REYES launches the "Kulay Pag-Asa Chula's Place Artistic Therapy Center at the PGH during the anniversary celebration of "Munting Paraiso." Joining him in the launch are Angela Ramos, Chula Ramos-Sembrano, Dr. Mike Alfiler as well as John and Linda Feight.

KIDS QUIZ

By Emman Cena

Know your animal phobias

LAST WEEK, WE HAD OUR QUIZ ON PHOBIAS TOWARD THINGS of different kinds—from cancer to thunder, needles to flowers. We learned that film actor Brad Pitt fears sharks among others.

For this second part of the series on phobias, we will focus on the fears of animals.

Are you afraid of them? Not unusual though. Did you know that Hollywood movie star Nicole Kidman is afraid of butterflies while Alexander the Great, Benito Mussolini and Napoleon Bonaparte were all terrified of cats?

Let us check your knowledge on animal phobias. Match the animal feared of on the left column with the corresponding phobia on the right. Best of luck kiddos!

Animal	Phobia
1. Mice	a. Ornithophobia
2. Birds	b. Ailurophobia
3. Cats	c. Musophobia
4. Chickens	d. Batrachophobia
5. Dogs	e. Entomophobia
6. Fish	f. Pediculophobia
7. Frogs	g. Hippophobia
8. Horses	h. Ichthyophobia
9. Insects	i. Cynophobia
10. Lice	j. Alektorophobia

Score: 1-4 Good; 5-7 Very Good; 8-10 Excellent
Reference: Book of Lists, 2005

Answers: 1-c, 2-a, 3-b, 4-j, 5-i, 6-h, 7-d, 8-g, 9-e, 10-f

REPUBLIC OF THE PHILIPPINES
DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE
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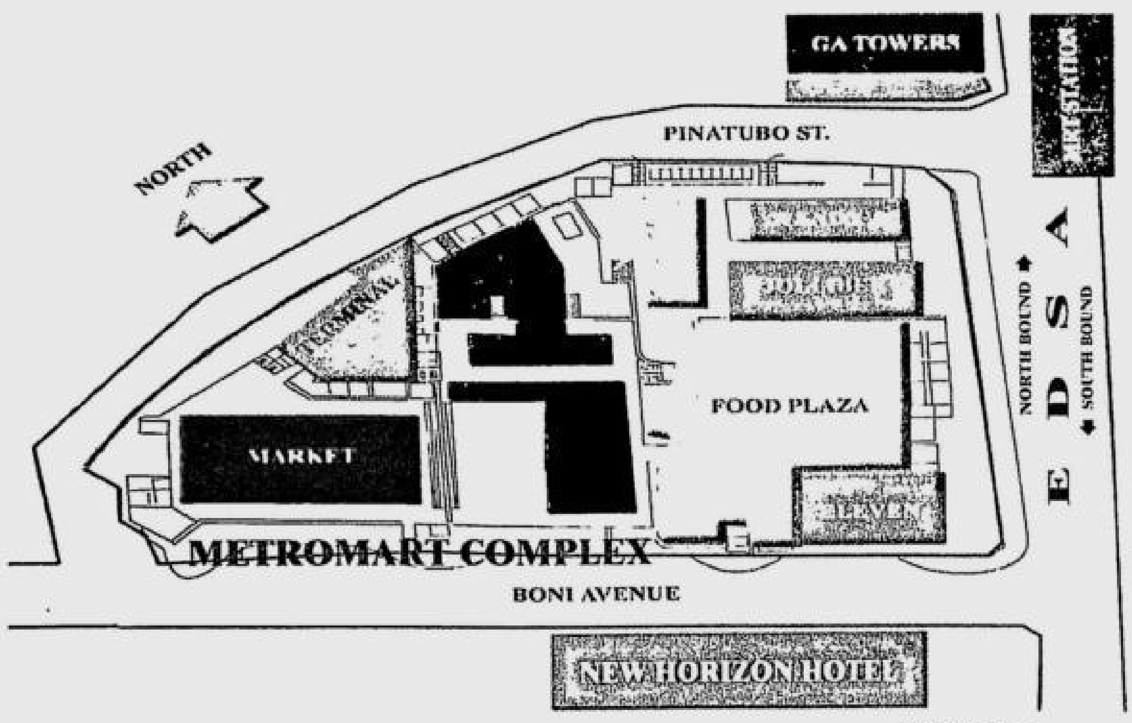
Brgy. San Lorenzo, Makati City Tel. No. 817-0771

PRIME PROPERTY FOR SALE



Vicinity Map

INVITATION TO BID

The Livelihood Corporation (LIVECOR), is offering for sale in cash or installment the property described below:

Description	**: Commercial Complex**
Area	**: 7,428.0 square meters**
Address	**: Along EDSA cor. Boni Avenue and Pinatubo Sts., Mandaluyong City**
Floor Price	**: ₱ 426,977,000.00**
Terms of Sale	**: Cash**

1. The sale of the property shall be on an **"AS-IS-WHERE-IS"** basis.
2. Bidders bond shall not be less than 1% of the floor price.
3. Bidding documents can be secured upon payment of non-refundable fee of P5,000.00 at the following address.

BIDS and AWARDS COMMITTEE
The Livelihood Corporation (LIVECOR)
7th Floor One Corporate Plaza,
845 A. Arnaiz Avenue, Makati City.

4. Pre-Bid Conference will be on December 19, 2007, Wednesday at 2:00PM, Conference Room, The Livelihood Corporation, 7th Floor One Corporate Plaza, 845 A. Arnaiz Avenue, Makati City.
5. The sealed bids should be dropped at the designated drop box located at the security desk of the Livelihood Corporation, 7th Floor One Corporate Plaza, 845 A. Arnaiz Avenue, Makati City on or before 2:00PM on January 18, 2008, Friday.
6. The property is available for inspection to all bidders during business days and hours from Mondays to Fridays.

For more details, please contact Luz C. Jacinto, BAC Secretariat at tel. no. (02) 817-07-71 / 817-04-64 and Cell No. 0918-6078530 or Felix Samson, Assistant Project Head, EDMD at tel. no. 531-3324 and cell no. 0928-3038068.

THE CORPORATION RESERVES THE RIGHT TO REJECT ANY OR ALL OFFERS AND TO WAIVE ANY DEFECTS OR TO ACCEPT SUCH OFFERS AS MAY BE CONSIDERED ADVANTAGEOUS TO THE CORPORATION.

For the Bids and Awards Committee:

(Sgd.) **E. ALEXIS G. SEVIDAL, CESO IV**
Chairman

(PDI–Dec. 8, 9 & 10, 2007)

Republic of the Philippines
PHILIPPINE HEALTH INSURANCE CORPORATION
PhilHealth Regional Office IV-A
AMCJ Square Building, Diversion Road, Brgy. Bocohan, Lucena City
Healthline (042) 373-6703-04 www.philhealth.gov.ph

INVITATION TO APPLY FOR ELIGIBILITY AND TO BID
No. 19-PB07

PUBLIC BIDDING FOR THE PROCUREMENT OF TWO YEARS LEASE CONTRACT FOR PRO IV-A MAIN OFFICE AND STORAGE BUILDING AT LUCENA CITY

The PhilHealth Regional Office IVA (PRO-IVA), through the Corporate Operating Budget (COB) 2007, intends to apply the sum of **PhP 6,575,284.80** as the Approved Budget for the Contract (ABC) to payments under the contract for the Procurement of Two Years Office Space Lease Contract for PRO IV-A Main Office and Storage Building at Lucena City. Said office space/building required shall have the following general specifications/descriptions:

1. The distance of nearest entrances between the proposed Office and Storage Space/Building shall not exceed fifteen (15) meters.
2. They shall be made of reinforced concrete.
3. The Office Space/Building frontage shall be located along the major road/s of the following places in Lucena City:
    - 3.1 City proper; it shall not be more than One Hundred Meters (100 m.) away from the regular routes of Public Utility Jeepneys plying Lucena City.
    - 3.2 Along Maharlika Highway starting from Gomez Street Extension to Apple and Peach Restaurant, Brgy. Kanlurang Mayao, Lucena City.
    - 3.3 Along Maharlika Highway starting from M.L. Tagarao Street to the junction connecting the Maharlika Highway and Diversion Road near Max's Restaurant at the boundary between Lucena City and Tayabas, Quezon.
    - 3.4 Along Doña Aurora Blvd. to Lucena Diversion Road.
    - 3.5 Along Lucena Diversion Road starting from Welmanville Subdivision, Brgy. Bocohan, to Lucena Grand Central Terminal, Brgy. Ibabang Dupay.
    - 3.6 Lucena Grand Central Terminal.
4. Presentable, ready to occupy; they shall be well-painted/finished, office space/building floors shall be ceramic tile-finished.
5. Office Space/building shall have a total area of One Thousand Thirty Five Square Meters (1,035 sq.m) having at least seven hundred fifty (750) square meters open space. It shall have a frontal dimension no less than twenty four (24) meters wide, which is divided into two: the main building, and a separate area having an area of seventy five to one hundred square meters (75-100 sq. m.).
   The main building shall at least be sixteen (16) meters wide.
6. Storage space/building shall have a total area of at least Five Hundred Eighty Three Square Meters (583 sq. m.), with an office room of at least Eighteen Square Meters (18 sq. m.) but not more than Twenty Five Square Meters (25 sq. m.), and a comfort room of at least Three Square Meters (3 sq. m.) but not more than Six Square Meters (6 sq. m.). Proposals with an office/ comfort room bigger than the herein prescribed limit shall be accepted provided that the excess area shall be given free.
7. Proposals having bigger areas than required herein (DELIVERABLES) shall be accepted provided that the excess area/s shall be given free of charge.

For detailed specifications/descriptions please contact our BAC Secretariat on the numbers stated below.

Rental Rate Limit :

Proposed Rental Rate shall not exceed Php180.00/sq.m. (Main Office Building)
Proposed Rental Rate shall not exceed Php128.00/sq.m. (Storage Building)

Escalation Rate shall not exceed 10% per year.

Approved Budget: Php 6, 575, 284.80

Bids received in excess of the **ABC** shall be automatically rejected at Bid Opening.

PRO-IVA now invites sealed Bids from eligible bidders for the Public Bidding for the Procurement of Two Years Office Space Lease Contract for PRO IV-A Main Office and Storage Building at Lucena City. The description of an eligible bidder is contained in the Bidding Documents.

Bidding will be conducted through open competitive bidding procedures using **non-discretionary pass/fail criteria** as specified in the Implementing Rules and Regulations Part A (IRR-A) of Republic Act 9184 (R.A. 9184), otherwise known as the "Government Procurement Reform Act," and is restricted to Filipino citizens/sole proprietorships, organizations with at least sixty percent (60%) interest or outstanding capital stock belonging to citizens of the Philippines, and to citizens or organization of a country the laws or regulations of which grant similar rights or privileges to Filipino citizens, pursuant to Republic Act 5183 (R.A. 5183) and subject to Commonwealth Act 138 (C.A. 138). Only Bids from Bidders who pass the eligibility check will be opened. The process for the eligibility check is described in the Bidding Documents. The bidder of the Lowest Calculated Bid (LCB) shall advance to the post qualification stage in order to finally determine responsiveness of the bid to technical and financial requirements of the project. The contract shall then be awarded to the Lowest Calculated Responsive Bidder (LCRB) who was determined as such during the post-qualification procedure. Interested Bidders may obtain further information from the PRO-IVA and inspect the Bidding Documents at the address given below during **Mondays to Fridays, 8:30 a.m. to 4:30 p.m., from December 6, 2007 to December 19, 2007.**
A complete set of Bidding Documents may be purchased by interested Bidders from **December 6, 2007 to December 19, 2007, Monday to Friday, 8:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m.** at the address below and upon payment of a non-refundable fee in the amount of **Six Thousand Pesos (Php 6,000.00).** The Bidding Documents shall be received personally by the prospective Bidder or his authorized representative.
PRO-IVA will hold a **Pre-Bid Conference** open to all interested parties on **December 18, 2007, 1:00 p.m.** at the Conference Room of the office address below.

Bids and Eligibility requirements must be delivered to the address below on or before **January 3, 2008, 10:00 a.m.** Late bids shall not be accepted. All bids must be accompanied by a Bid security in any of the following forms and amount:

Forms of Security	Minimum Amount in % of Approved Budget for the Contract to be Bid	Amount of Bid Security
Cash, certified check, cashier's check, manager's check, bank draft or irrevocable letter of credit	One percent (1%)	Php 65,752.85
Bank Guarantee	One and a half percent (1 ½%)	Php 98,629.27
Surety Bond	Two and a half percent (2 ½%)	Php 164,382.12
Foreign Government Guarantee	One hundred percent (100%)	Php 6,575,284.80

Bid opening shall be on **January 3, 2008, 10:15 a.m.** at the Conference Room of PRO-IVA. Bids will be opened in the presence of the Bidder's representatives who choose to attend at the address below.

The official time clock shall be the wall clock at the conference room entrance.

PRO-IVA reserves the right to accept or reject any Bid, and to annul the bidding process and reject all Bids at any time prior to contract award, without thereby incurring any liability to the affected Bidder or Bidders.

PhilHealth Regional Office – IVA
BENJIE A. CUVINAR / CECILIA I. PUREZA (BAC Secretariats)
AMCJ Square Bldg., Diversion Road, Brgy. Domoit, Lucena City
Tel.No.(042)373-7782
Facsimile No. (042)373-6936
e-mail address: admin.pro4a@philhealth.gov.ph

(Sgd.) **MIGUEL T. MACALINAO**
Chairperson, Bids and Awards Committee

(PDI – December 8, 2007)

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UNIT 702 RICHVILLE CORPORATE CENTRE, 1314 COMMERCE AVENUE
MADRIGAL BUSINESS PARK, ALABANG, MUNTINLUPA CITY
TEL NO.: 775-0682 EMAIL: taps_inc@yahoo.com

AFP RETIREMENT AND SEPARATION BENEFITS SYSTEM
Camp General Emilio Aguinaldo, Quezon City

INVITATION TO APPLY FOR ELIGIBILITY AND TO BID
Republic of the Philippines
AFP-Retirement & Separation Benefits System

Preparation of Feasibility Study, Socio-Economic Benefit-Cost Study and Development Maps and Plans for Lots located in Brgy. Calubcob, Silang, Cavite

1. The **AFP RETIREMENT AND SEPARATION BENEFITS SYSTEM (AFP-RSBS)**, through ***the Budget approved by its Board of Trustees*** intends to apply the sum of **Two Hundred Thousand Pesos (P200,000.00)** being the Approved Budget for the Contract (ABC) to payments under the contract for the ***Preparation of Feasibility Study, Socio-Economic Benefit-Cost Study and Development Maps and Plans for Lots located in Brgy. Calubcob, Silang, Cavite.*** Bids received in excess of the ABC shall be automatically rejected on the day of the opening of the financial proposals.
2. The AFP-RSBS now calls for the submission of ***Letters of Intent (LOIs)*** from potential bidders to apply for eligibility and short listing for the ***Preparation of Feasibility Study, Socio-Economic Benefit-Cost Study and Development Maps and Plans for Lots located in Brgy. Calubcob, Silang, Cavite.*** Interested consultants must submit their LOIs on or before ***December 27, 2007*** at the ***BAC Secretariat Office, AFP-RSBS Building, 424 Capinpin Avenue, Camp Gen. Emilio Aguinaldo, Quezon City*** and secure the Eligibility Documents therefrom. Applications for eligibility will be evaluated on a "pass/fail" basis. The last day for the submission of the accomplished Eligibility Documents shall be on ***January 10, 2008*** at the ***BAC Secretariat Office,*** The date of the opening of Eligibility Documents shall be on ***January 11, 2008*** at the ***AFP-RSBS Boardroom, 424 Capinpin Avenue, Camp Gen. Emilio Aguinaldo, Quezon City.*** Only those that are short listed will be entitled to submit bids.
3. The BAC shall draw up the short list of consultants from those who have submitted ***LOIs*** and have been determined as eligible both in accordance with the provisions of Republic Act 9184 (R.A. 9184) and its Implementing Rules and Regulations Part A (IRR-A). The short list of prospective bidders shall consist of ***five (5)*** consultants. The criteria and rating system for short listing are:

ITEM	WEIGHT RATING SCORE
I. APPLICABLE EXPERIENCE (50%)	
a) Completed consulting services of size, complexity and technical specialty comparable to job under consideration including quality of performance	(30%)
b) Other completed consulting services related to the job under consideration	(10%)
c) Known cases of prior performance, including quality of work conforming to obligations and costs of services	(10%)
II. QUALIFICATION OF PERSONNEL (30%)	
Qualification of the key personnel that may be assigned to the job	(30%)
III. JOB CAPACITY (20%)	
Current workload relative to capacity	(20%)

4. Bidding will be conducted through open competitive bidding procedures as specified in the IRR-A of R.A. 9184, and only bids from short listed consultants will be opened. In accordance with IRR-A of R.A. 9184 the contract will only be awarded to the Highest Rated and Responsive Bidder who was determined as such during post-qualification.

   The PROCURING ENTITY shall evaluate bids using the ***Quality-Cost Based Evaluation (QCBE)*** procedure. The criteria and rating system for the evaluation of bids shall be provided in the Instructions to Bidders.
5. Interested consultants may obtain further information from the ***AFP-RSBS*** at the address given below from ***8:00 AM to 5:00 PM, Monday to Friday.***

AFP-RSBS Bids and Awards Committee
AFP-RSBS Building, 424 Capinpin Avenue
Camp Gen. Emilio Aguinaldo, Quezon City
Tel. No. 911-87-14

Asset Enhancement Office
Ms. Alma P. Aban
AFP-RSBS Bldg, 424 Capinpin Avenue
Camp General Emilio Aguinaldo, Quezon City
Tel. /Fax No. 911-21-55

6. The contract shall be completed within one hundred twenty (120) calendar days.
7. The AFP-RSBS reserves the right to reject any and all bids, annul the bidding process, or not award the contract at any time prior to the contract award, without thereby incurring any liability to the affected bidder or bidders.

(Sgd.) **MICHAEL A. SANCHEZ**
Chairman, Bids and Awards Committee

(PDI - Dec. 8, 2007)

NOTICE
TO THE PUBLIC

Be it known to the public that MORANTE BUILDERS & SUPPLY with office address at Rizal Street, Legazpi City shall change its business name and status to MACROPRIME BUILDERS CORPORATION.

THE MANAGEMENT

(PDI - Dec. 8, 2007)

NOTICE
TO THE PUBLIC

Be it known to the public that LO-TONE CONSTRUCTION & SUPPLY with office address at Diversion Road, Bogtong, Legazpi City shall change its business name and status to HI-TONE CONSTRUCTION AND DEVELOPMENT CORPORATION with office address at Satelite Market, Bitano, Legazpi City.

THE MANAGEMENT

(PDI - Dec. 8, 2007)

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Lovingly remembered and truly missed

Nonoy, Rorie and **Nikolai Buncio**
relatives and friends remember

Deanna R. Buncio

(April 10, 1971 - December 8, 2003)

on her 4th year of passage to eternal life

Masses for her eternal happiness are offered today, December 8, 2007 at the following churches:

Immaculate Conception Cathedral Parish *Lantana St., Cubao, Q.C.*	7:15 AM 9:15 AM 11:00 AM	4:45 PM 6:00 PM
Christ the King *E. Rodriguez Avenue, Q.C.*	7:00 AM 11:30 AM	6:00 PM
Mount Carmel Shrine *New Manila, Q.C.*	6:00 AM 9:45 AM	12:15 NN 7:30 PM
Parish of the Holy Sacrifice *U.P., Diliman, Q.C.*	6:00 AM 8:00 AM	12:00 NN 6:00 PM
Sacred Heart of Jesus Parish *Kamuning, Q.C.*	8:00 AM	12:15 NN 8:00 PM
Sta. Maria della Strada *Katipunan Road, Q.C.*	6:00 AM 12:00 NN	6:00 PM 8:00 PM

"A good name is better than fine perfume, and the day of death better than the day of birth." – Ecclesiastes 7:1

MARCELO DESIDERIO CRUZ, JR., MD

of Navotas City and Alabang, Muntinlupa

UP Medicine Class 1948
Past President, Philippine Obstetrics and Gynecological Society
Former Assistant Dean, FEU-NRMF College of Medicine
Professor Emeritus, FEU-NRMF Dept. of Obstetrics and Gynecology

Peacefully joined our Lord on December 5, 2007 at the age of 83.

His loving wife **Lucina Consunji Mateo**; children and grandchildren **Nina & Jun Fua**, with **Dennis, Celine & David Palter**, and **Cristina**; **Monette & Willie Barreiro**, with **Mikki & Dindo Santos**, and **Gabby**; **Chao & Gary Sevilla**, with **Kino**; **Toby & Monsy Adriano** with **Isa** and **Miqui**; great-grandchild **Sammy Santos**; siblings **Manuel** (†), **Serafin** (†), **Rosalina**, **Sr. Carmencita**, **Mariano** (†), **German**, **Sr. Carmela**, and **Rogelio** (†); brothers-in-law and sisters-in-law, request your prayers for the eternal repose of his soul.

His remains lie in state at the Bonifacio Chapel, La Funeraria Paz, Sucat, Parañaque.

He will be cremated on Sunday, December 9, 2007 at 2 p.m., after the Holy Mass at 12 noon.

"Eternal life will swallow up that which can die. God made us for this very reason and He has given us the Spirit as a guarantee that we will live again."— 2 Corinthians 5:4-5

GEORGE QUE PHI CHIM

May 8, 1912 - December 4, 2007

Peacefully joined his Creator and his wife ***Elizabeth*** *at the age of 96.*

His bereaved children **Alexander** (†), **Eleanor** (†), **Anthony**, **Linda** and **Daniel** (†); children-in-law, grandchildren, and great grandchildren, other relatives and friends requests the pious readers to pray for the eternal repose of his soul.

His remains lie in state at Faith Chapel, Arlington Memorial Chapels, #12 G. Araneta Avenue, Quezon City.

Interment will be on Monday, December 10, 2007 at 1:00 p.m. at the Ever Memorial Park, Lawang Bato, Valenzuela City.

(Please omit flowers)

Isidra Adorable - Constantino

Joined her Creator on December 06, 2007 at the age of 94

She will be missed by her children, ***Mary, Francis & Joy****, sisters & brothers* ***Raquel Adorable- Atendido, Antonio & Violeta Adorable, Jose & Benigna Adorable-Zoleta****; grandchildren, nephews & nieces.*

Her body lies in state at Our Lady of Beautiful Love, Merville Church, Parañaque. Final interment on December 09, 2007 at Manila Memorial Park Sucat Parañaque after the 2:00 PM mass.

EXEQUIEL "IKE" LOPEZ DAVID

April 10, 1959 - November 5, 2007
Seattle, Washington, USA

Peacefully joined his Creator at the age of 48

His mother Nena; father Col. David M. David (†); daughter Alexa; siblings Manny Boy, Menchu, Marlien, Marissa; in-laws Susan, Ernie, Arnel; nephews and nieces request pious readers to pray for the eternal repose of his soul.

His ashes lie in state at Loyola Memorial Chapel, Guadalupe, Makati.

Inurnment will be on December 09, 2007 (Sunday), 9:30 am at The Pavilion, The Heritage Park, Fort Bonifacio, Taguig City

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CLASSIFIEDS

Home Guaranty Corporation

Office of the President

NOTICE OF SALE

The Home Guaranty Corporation is offering for sale the following properties:

	PROPERTY LOCATION	BLOCK	LOT	TYPE LOT / H&L	LOT AREA	SELLING PRICE	DESCRIPTION
1	Victoria Valley Subdivision, Cainta, Rizal	1	3	Lot only	804	707,520.00	vacant lot
2	Victoria Valley Subdivision, Cainta, Rizal	1	7	Lot only	1,976	1,738,880.00	vacant lot
3	Victoria Valley Subdivision, Antipolo City		20	Lot only	256	281,600.00	irregular lot
4	Victoria Valley Subdivision, Antipolo City		21	Lot only	131	144,100.00	irregular lot
	Total				3,167	2,872,100.00	

INTERESTED PARTIES MAY CALL ASSET MANAGEMENT AND DISPOSITION GROUP AT 897-32-86 OR 897-32-90 OR VISIT THE HEAD OFFICE AT JADE BUILDING, NO. 335 SEN. GIL PUYAT AVENUE, MAKATI CITY.

(Sgd.) **RAFAEL P. DELOS SANTOS**
VICE PRESIDENT
ASSET MANAGEMENT AND
DISPOSITION GROUP

(PDI–Dec. 2 & 8, 2007)

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NOTICE TO THE PUBLIC

Notice is hereby given that Cicero Lumawig is not in any way connected with UIGDC/Subic Bay Golf & Country Club. Any transaction entered into or made through him for the company shall not be honored.

(PDI – December 8, 2007)

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Home Guaranty Corporation

Office of the President

INVITATION TO APPLY FOR ELIGIBILITY AND TO BID

The Home Guaranty Corporation (HGC) is inviting interested parties to submit separate proposals for the disposition of the two projects described under a joint venture arrangement:

	MARGARITA EAST VILLE			MARGARITA PLAZA		
	C. Lawis St., Brgy. San Isidro, Antipolo City			Scouts Limbaga, Rallos & Ybardolaza, Brgy. Sacred Heart, Quezon City		
	Area (sq.m.)	Value of the Property	HGC's Guaranteed Share	Area (sq.m.)	Value of the Property	HGC's Guaranteed Share
House & Lot	3,959	44,396,000.00	P44M or 40% of the net proceeds plus the value of land, whichever is higher	-	0.00	P100M or 40% of the net proceeds plus the value of land, whichever is higher
Lot only	3,564	11,058,000.00		2,366	50,882,000.00	
TOTAL	7,523	55,454,000.00		2,366	50,882,000.00	

Payment of HGC's guaranteed share must not exceed a maximum of three (3) years.

Bidders are advised to inspect the subject properties to determine their actual conditions. For each project, bidding documents can be obtained from the HGC's Asset Management Department (AMD) at Jade Building (4th Floor), 335 Sen. Gil Puyat Avenue, Makati City upon payment of a non-refundable fee of **TWENTY FIVE THOUSAND PESOS (P 25,000.00)** from **December 17 to 28, 2007.** For further inquiries please call the AMD at tel. nos. 897-3286 & 897-3290 or visit the HGC office at Jade Building, 335 Sen. Gil Puyat Avenue, Makati City.

THE CORPORATION RESERVES THE RIGHT TO REJECT ANY OR ALL OFFERS AND TO WAIVE ANY DEFECTS OR TO ACCEPT SUCH OFFERS AS MAY BE CONSIDERED ADVANTAGEOUS TO THE CORPORATION.

(Sgd.) **ATTY. DANILO C. JAVIER**
Chairman
Asset Disposition Committee

(PDI – December 8 & 15, 2007)

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For particulars, please call Philam Ins. Co., Inc. c/o Tristan Yoro & Arvin Calipjo at Tel. No. 815-30-00.

(PDI - December 8 & 9, 2007)

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* Please submit resumé with 2x2 photo to dindo515@yahoo.com or to the MEM I Guard on Duty at G. Enriquez St., Brgy Vergara, Mandaluyong City. Call 407-7138 for details.

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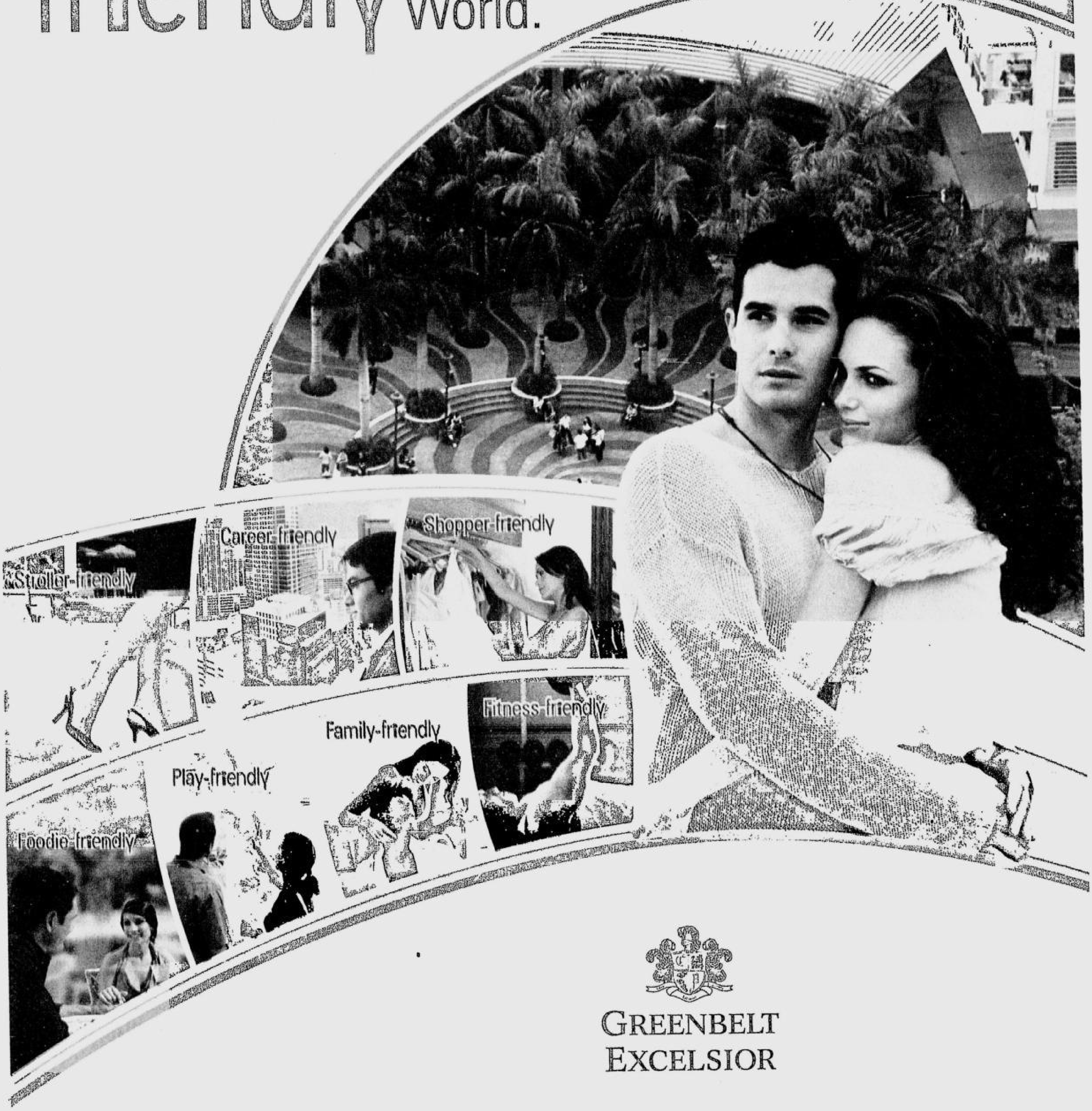
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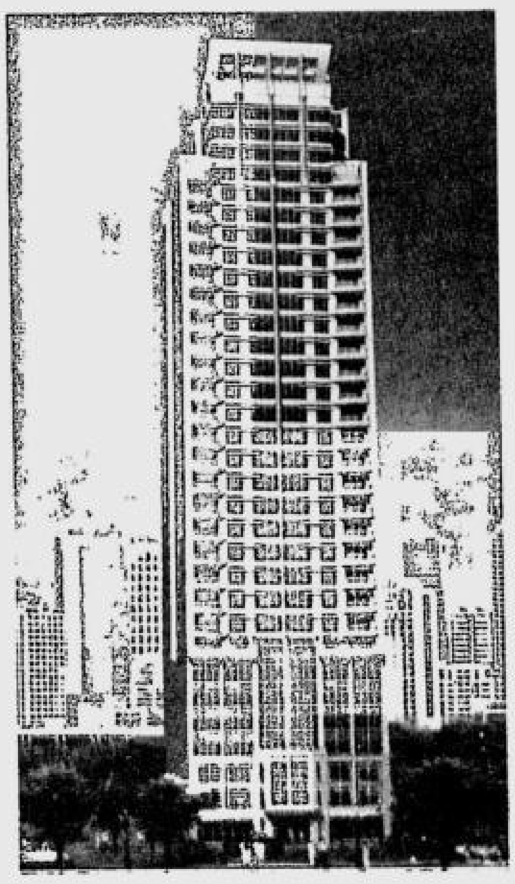

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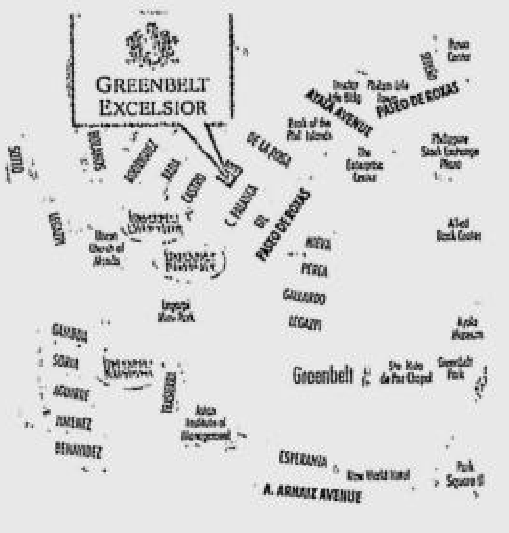
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PROPERTY

Editor Cesar D. Mangawang

Problem with overzealous property agents? Use online tools

By Tessa R. Salazar

THE COMPETITION HAS become fierce. So much so that some "overly aggressive" entities promise the sun and the moon just to snatch that sweet, sweet deal from overseas buyers. Philippine property advocates are now sounding the alarm that complaints from "helpless property buyers from overseas are on the rise."

Philippine Voyager website in its recent issue "Should you buy properties in the Philippines or rent first?" has observed that many expatriates and foreigners have been lured into buying properties in the Philippines by aggressive real estate companies, and that most of these investors would readily believe the words of the agents. It explained that these agents are believable "mainly because they're either relatives or close friends who are armed with the information."

> Helpless property buyers from overseas are on the rise

Complaints

Soon after investors put their money in, the complaints follow. Some common complaints Philippine Voyager has taken note of are the poor quality of construction; the property is situated too far from other establishments like schools, hospitals and malls; unreasonable home association and maintenance fees; and a number of other pertinent information that were either withheld or not explained properly during the selling process. These complaints have many times led to investors moving back to their respective countries.

"There are also numerous occasions where the bank had already foreclosed on the property and would have many liens against it. Buying these foreclosed properties could be a nightmare to would-be investors because it could tie them up in legal proceedings for a long time."

Eric Soriano, who has been in the property sector for 21 years, has likewise observed that the number of complaints has swelled. "Close to a hundred high rises and easily 50 horizontal developments are slated for completion anytime between now and 2010, so we see a dire situation for potentially thousands of hopeless primary users."

He also observed the numerous complaints of poor build quality and near-zero customer service. "And they (agents) use our laws and their influence as their shield against grieving homebuyers."

Soriano is advocating for best practices and educating consumers and players on the need to raise the bar insofar as service and quality is concerned. He also said that "it is also the best time to be unkind to developers and agents that have completely abandoned the concept of value for money."

Prince Christian R. Cruz, senior economist, Global Property Guide (www.globalpropertyguide.com), "it is not only expats and overseas buyers who buy without researching, a lot of buyers—even in the Philippines—tend to buy (almost like they were) blindfolded."

Cruz cited several reasons for this: some buyers were too busy to bother about the details, while others were intimidated by the legal gobbledygook in the sales contract.

Online tools

"The problem is exacerbated for overseas buyers. However, there are online tools that can help the buyer in checking the different aspects of the property investment."

1 The buyer must check with the Housing and Land Use Regulatory Board (http://www.hlurb.gov.ph/) if the seller or developer has a License to Sell and/or Development Permit. The license must be current and for the specific condominium or subdivision that they are selling. It also has a list of registered real estate brokers, companies and salesmen.

2 The buyer can use Google Earth (http://earth.google.com/) to check the location of the condominium or subdivision. Most location maps provided by developers are disproportionately inaccurate. They highlight key locations to create an impression that they are much closer to the subdivision or condominium. In Google Earth, the buyer can check the actual distance and accessibility of the development.

3 The buyer can also check websites of other real estate firms to check the prices of nearby properties. For instance, www.condo.com.ph has listings of condominiums for sale and for rent. The information is useful especially if the buyer intends to rent out theproperty.

4 The buyer can also ask banks regarding foreclosed properties. Banks tend to provide more accurate descriptions of the status of property and prices are typically lower. They also provide information on how to get a housing loan.

5 The buyer can check the websites of various government agencies and local government units for projects and plans that may affect the property value. A good example is the website of Makati City government (http://www.makati.gov. ph/portal/index.jsp), it has information on schools, hospitals and churches in each and every barangay (town). It also provide information on services provided by the city government.

Leading the drive to earn homebuyers' trust

By Charles E. Buban

ALVAREZ said he is proud to be among the developers that are able to provide quality housing packages to buyers no matter how low or how high their budget may be.

DURING THE PAST YEARS, THE PRICE OF homes have become too expensive for many prospective homebuyers.

This is because while interest rates have fallen, the prices for land and construction materials have skyrocketed.

These factors are forcing home developers to raise their price. In a number of cases, a home developer will resort to other means like scrimping on materials or workmanship or not completing the necessary basic services (road, water, electricity, sewage) to maintain an attractive price tag.

Despite this fact, more and more Filipinos are more than willing to stretch their finances to the limit just to buy the homes of their dreams or take the bitter pill, so to speak, just to have a home that they could call their own.

Lifelong dream

"You can't blame these people—owning a home is a lifelong dream. For most Filipinos, this is their chance to change their family lives and to have something that they could pass on to their children," said Romarico Alvarez, chair of PA Alvarez Properties and Development Corp., which was recently awarded the leading developer for socialized housing in Region 4-A by the Housing and Land Use Regulatory Board.

Alvarez lamented that a number of these prospective homebuyers thought that the only way they could be sure with their hard-earned money is to invest with the big names in the industry.

"Considering that most of these big players don't have enough number of projects that would cater to low- and medium-income homebuyers, I would advise the market to look beyond as there are so many other players out there who could deliver quality yet reasonably priced home packages," said Alvarez, whose company marks its 13th year today.

Established in 1994, PA Alvarez Properties has been slowly building its name around Laguna with its various small- and medium-scale development projects.

St. Joseph the Worker

Naming its initial project after his family's patron saint, St. Joseph the Worker, Alvarez converted a family-owned 2.3-hectare farmland into a commercial subdivision, the St. Joseph Village 1, in 1994 located in Barangay San Vicente, San Pedro, Laguna.

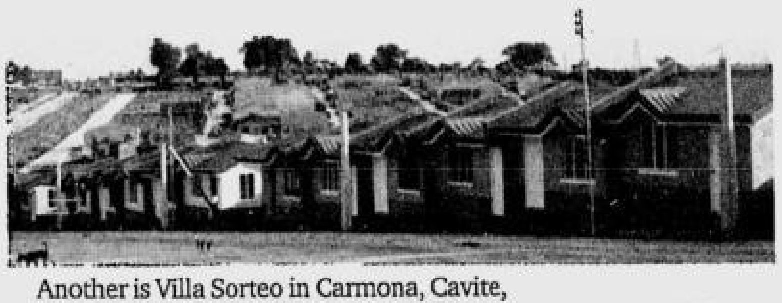
"It offered a selection of over 200 housing units that were successfully sold out in less than four months!," Alvarez reported. "We realized at the time that the market is just waiting for some developer to come up with a package that is not too expensive and yet a community that is well thought of and with housing units that offer quality workmanship."

This inspired Alvarez to continue on building more communities.

At present, there are now 10 St. Joseph Villages. The 10-hectare first phase of St. Joseph Village 10, is in fact, ready to be turned over before yearend. With 1,300 units built, they were sold at prices from P425,000 to P550,000.

"Because of the demand, St. Joseph 10 is now on the second phase that will have over 400 units on its 6-hectare land area. The third phase, where some 1,000 units will be offered on a 13-hectare land area, is upcoming," shared Alvarez.

Aside from St. Joseph Villages, PA Alvarez Properties has also developed in Barandal, Calamba the Laguna Buenavista Exec Homes, which is a 27-hectare development with unit prices ranging from 495,000 to P2 million.



TO DEAL with the country's 1.4-million housing backlog, Alvarez believes more developers should invest more in small- and medium-size projects.

Another is Villa Sorteo in Carmona, Cavite, a 3-hectare community that offers 250 units with unit prices ranging from P800,000 to P1.3 million.

Inspiring

"It's very inspiring for us that there are so many Filipino homebuyers who long to have a home of their own. We are glad that a lot of them dared to look further afield to find us developers whose projects are worthy of their trust," Alvarez said.

He believes that developers, including PA Alvarez Properties, must continue to deliver to their buyers properly built homes, with complete amenities, and reasonably priced home packages to earn trust from their market.

"Besides, developers like us should play a more active role in helping the country reduce its housing backlog that now stands at 1.4 million. I strongly believe that this could only be done if developers invest more in small- and medium-size developments like what we have been doing for the past 13 years," Alvarez said.

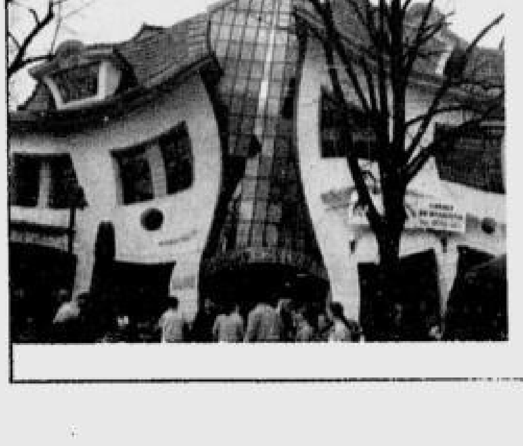
AWESOME STRUCTURES

By Emman Cena

The Crooked House

FOR THE RECORD, THE DANCING House (in Czech Republic) is not alone in the department of the higgledy-piggledy constructed buildings. Actually there's a lot more structures which defied the convention, edifices put up out of man's creative and playful minds.

Though it looks like something out of a surrealist painting or a Disney cartoon, a real building known as Krzywy Domek (or the "Crooked House") is hot to the eyes of passersby and tourists in Sopot, Poland.



The Crooked House is considered to be the most photographed object in the city with its luscious curves topped with a roof of blue-green enameled shingles designed to give the impression of dragon scales. It also has colorful stained glass entrances, stone elevation decors and windows framed with sandstone.

Filled with shops, bars and cafés, the 4,000-square-meter building is a certified tourist-drawer. So if you happen to pass by the strip of Rezydent shopping center, don't forget to make your best pose and get your souvenir photos at the famous Crooked House.

The house, which opened in 2004, was designed by Polish architect Szotyéscy Zalesk, who was believed to have been inspired by the fairytale illustrations of Jan Marcin Szancer and the drawings of the Swedish artist and Sopot resident Per Dahlberg. Its construction began in January 2003 and took a year to finish.

References:

http://www.lifestyle13.com,
http://www.inyourpocket.com

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GA Sky Suites' embarks on landmark campaign

The new Globe Asiatique Sky Suites TV commercial defines the GA lifestyle.

It seemed that it was a just a while when we saw the three-day smashing grand launch of a brave new landmark, the GA Sky Suites.

Credit that to Globe Asiatique, one of the country's reliable and pioneering real estate developers.

Envisioned to be a landmark in the league of the famous towers in the world, GA Sky Suites would rise at the corner of the metropolis' two major thoroughfares-Edsa and Quezon Avenue-boasting a bio-friendly sky garden, a high-tech corporate tower and a posh residential building.

Now, the GA Sky Suites would be treading on another groundbreaking endeavor, a print and TV campaign which would showcase the kind of lifestyle one would have in a place which you can truly call home.

Divine Lee, vice president for international sales and marketing of Globe Asiatique, the developer of GA Sky Suites, shares that all real estate campaigns both in print and television always convey images of happy faces of families and amenities of the project. She says that since what will soon rise is a landmark, they believe that their campaign should also be something of a different scale.

"This new campaign would surely make people think and imagine what kind of life they would have because we would be showing the kind of lifestyle GA Sky Suites offers," she notes.

Lee adds that in the TV commercial, they would relate the idea that you don't have to be stuck in the usual condos.

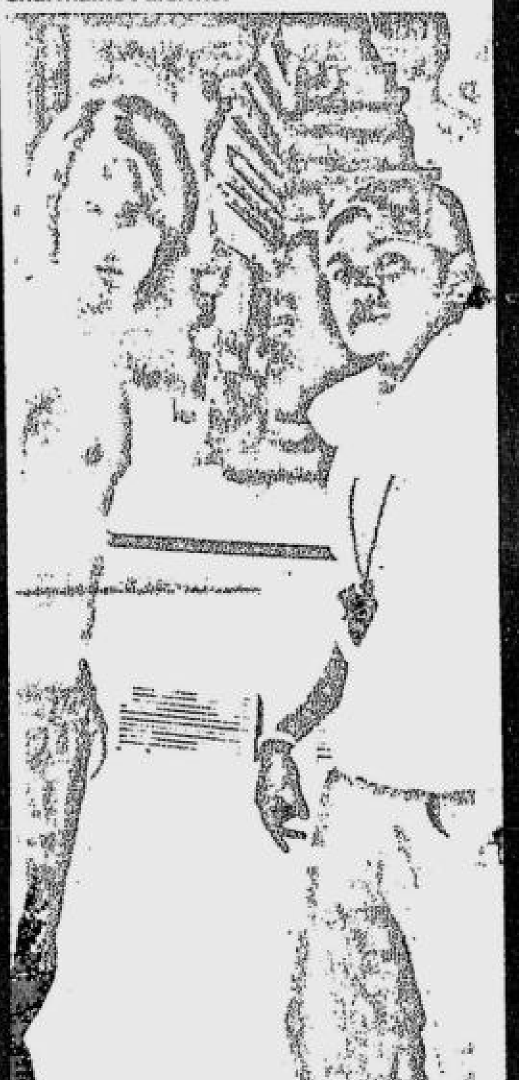
"We know that your home affects everything in your life, including your work. At GA Sky Suites, what we're offering is a lifestyle, a home which one can essentially call a home and not a four-corner room with nothing but walls. We wanted to convey the idea that condos are not places which you would go to just to sleep."

Lee says that the project is a product of first-hand knowledge of the needs of people whom Globe Asiatique has been dealing with throughout the years. It's also a conception of young, dynamic and talented young team of Globe Asiatique led by Lee who hopes to make a mark by creating something novel.

"It's a lifestyle that we're offering, not just mere [illegible]ace," she stresses.

Lee adds that they are coming up with a TV

Last minute touches from stylist Charmaine Palermo.



Taking his cue from the director.

Models talk about their scene.

campaign that is out of ordinary since "it is part of thinking out of the box."

"We just don't want to follow what the others are doing. We'd rather take risks and experiment on new things. We know that starting a trend best suit Globe Asiatique," Lee explains.

The TV campaign will be released towards the end of this month.

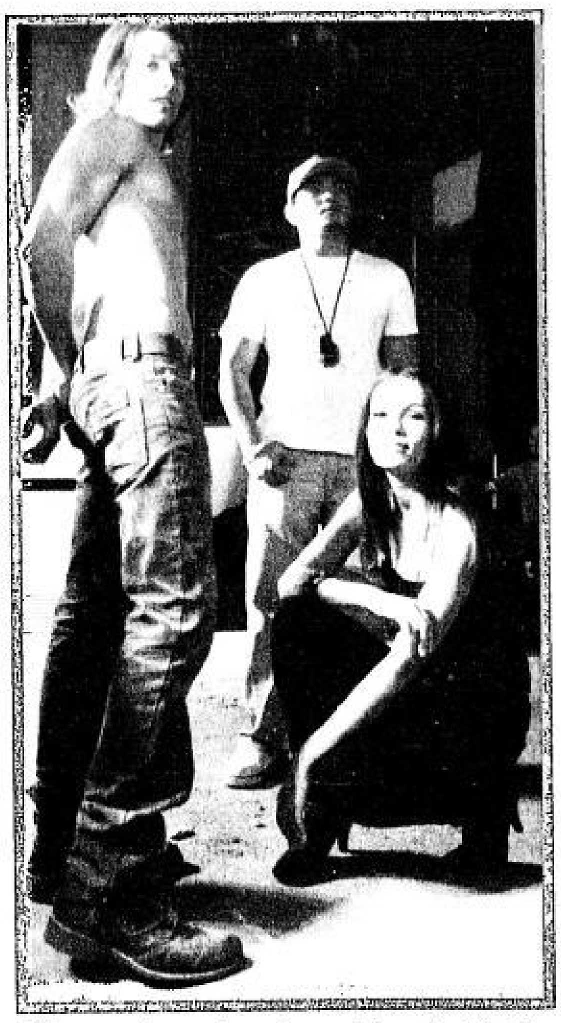
A glass statue at night

GA Sky Suites will be built out of concrete, glass and steel, a soaring edifice described as bioclimatic is a modern building well ahead of its time. Divided into two main structures-a semi-circular residential building and a curvilinear corporate tower-each unit provides breathtaking views of its surrounding areas. The architectural work of art, a seamless fusion of style and function, also features four loft styles-the podium loft, garden loft, sky loft and penthouse.

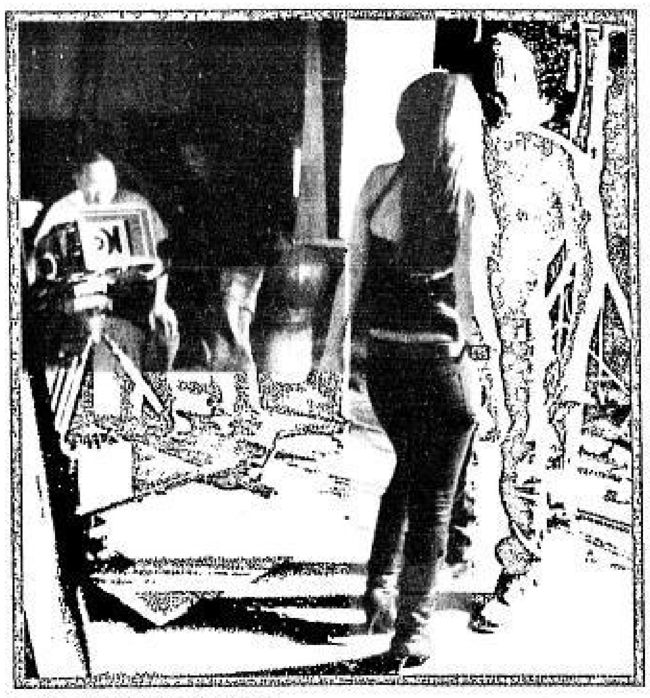
The two-floor commercial area can be found at the podium with various stores, service outlets, restaurants and other dining areas to cater to the residents needs. The 25-story corporate tower, which boasts of prime office space, is strategically located next to the residential building for easy access and convenience.

GA Sky Suites is also angled to avoid the sun's direct rays but nonetheless allows natural light to come in, perfect for seeing the sights on lazy afternoons. It is a glass statue which would radiantly glow at night. Witness the setting of the sun and the moonlit night with your very own front seat in the sky.

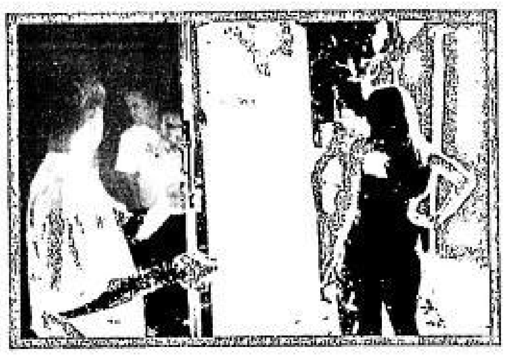
"A home should be a sanctuary where it's a joy to live. You have a choice," Lee concludes as she sums up the concept of GA Sky Suites' new campaign.



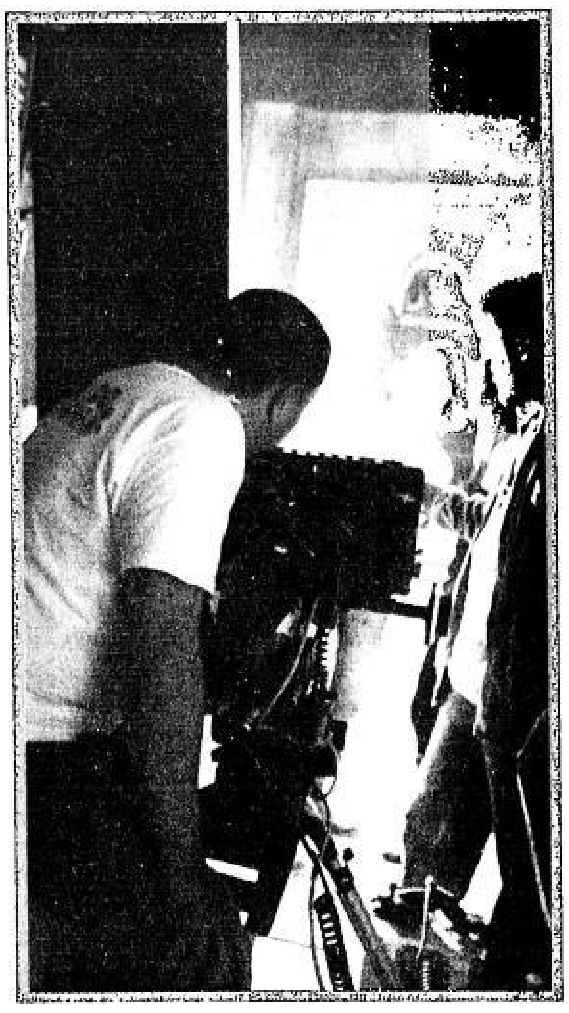
All prepped up and ready, models are briefed for the final frame.



Let's get the film rolling!



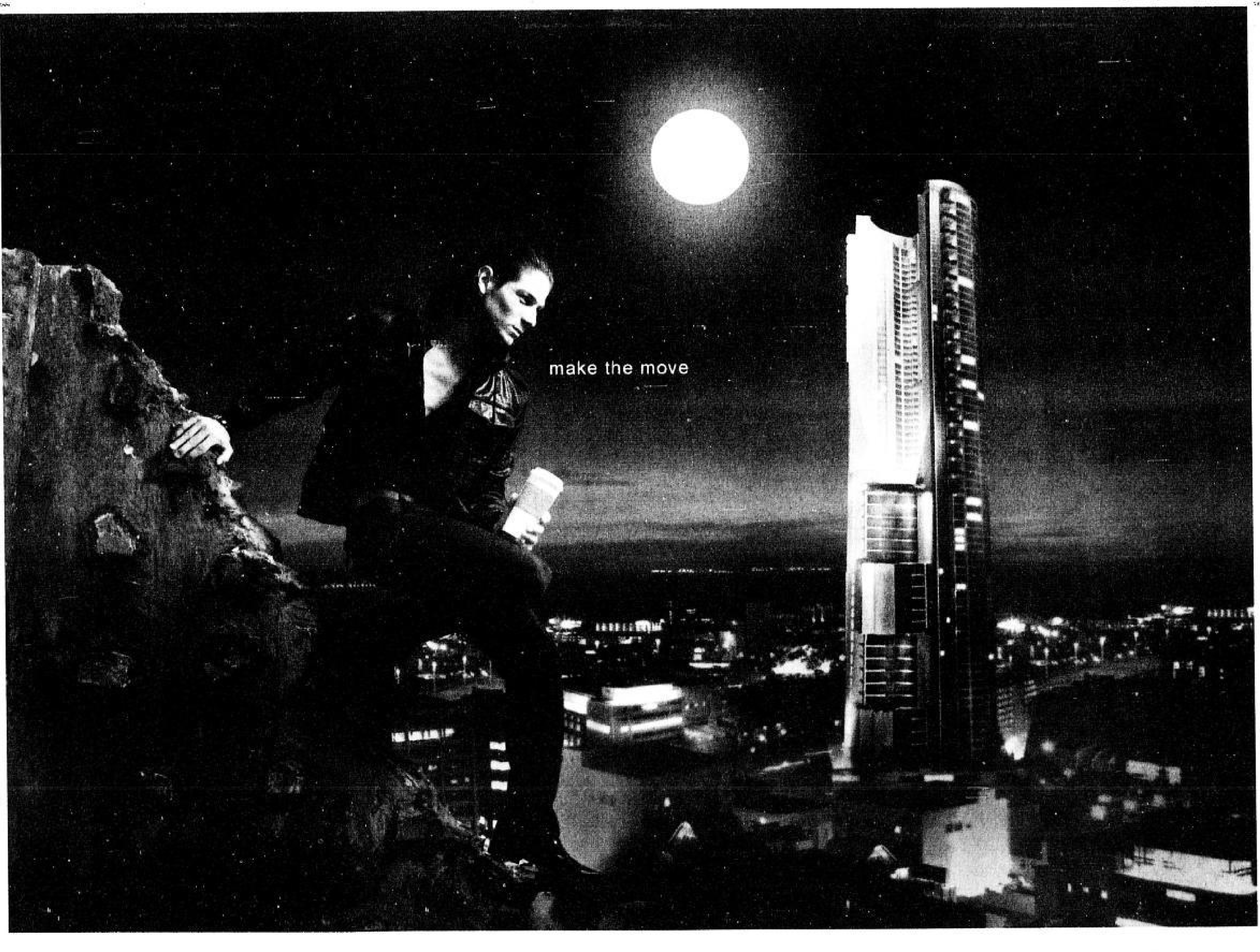
All eyes and ears on Director Paul Basinilio.

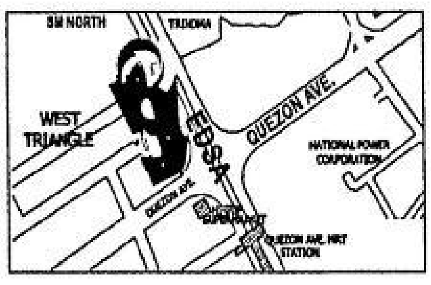


Taking a closer look at the final scene of the GA Sky Suites TV commercial.

Director Paul Basinilio, the GA Sky Suites Models, and Globe Asiatique VP for Sales and Marketing Divine Lee

Marketing Executive Eah Medina, Globe Asiatique VP for Sales and Marketing Divine Lee, and Marketing Executive Ther Ortiz





www.gaskysuites.com

In life, change is the only thing that's constant. At GA Sky Suites, we keep up with your lifestyle. It's a posh residential building projected to become the tallest landmark along historic EDSA. Here, flat units are a thing of the past. Each fully finished Loft gives you not just the space, but a commanding view of the whole city, day and night. With 24/7 establishments, the grandest malls, the best schools, and knockout facilities surrounding this mammoth tower, the high life has never been this reachable. Living here will always perk you up. NO DOWN PAYMENT! Get a 3BR Suite - For as low as P19,075.00/month (30% equity for 48 months) and 70% balance upon turn-over is only P19,221.75/month.

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Smart lighting

LIVING ARCHITECTURE

Marcos de Guzman Jr.

IN THE PAST DECADES, THE dwindling supply of energy did not loom as a serious problem. We seemed to have such an abundance that we became so dependent on it, to the point that some people have abused it, thinking that it could never run out. Now, we are forced to think again. We are beginning to feel the pinch with the high cost of energy generation and the adverse effect of actions we had always thought harmless.

The norm was that as long as we could afford to shoulder the cost, then it was ok for us to use as much electricity as we wanted. I believe it's time to reorient our way of thinking. There are two facts we should acknowledge. First of all, the supply of fossil fuel does run out. Secondly, its untoward use adversely affects our environment, giving rise to the specter of global warming.

Practicing smart lighting

However, with judicious use of electrical power, we can contribute effectively to preserving our ecosystem and promoting sustainability. To this end, here are some ways to practice smart lighting in our homes.

- **Make an honest effort to find out which lights in your home you do not really need or use infrequently.** See if you can replace them with more energy-efficient fixtures. There are many low-wattage lighting fixtures in the market with better illuminating power. These likewise produce less heat.
- **Limit the use of lights used only for esthetic effect to those times or occasions when they will be most appreciated although you need not remove them.** Try to identify which of them are practical enough to serve as ambient lighting at night. Most of the time, this type of lighting is situated on hallways, foyers, stairwells, porches and garages. Often, these areas require light only sufficient for walking. At times, instead of having one bright light in the ceiling, an interesting wall lamp or an indirect light that merely casts a "glow" effect will suffice.
- **Avoid glare.** Unequal distribution of light may not be comfortable in a particular room. Indirect lighting is a type of system wherein you achieve illumination without seeing the light source, thus avoiding glare. With this type of lighting, you need not have very bright rooms and still achieve a pleasing effect. In this case, you may use low-wattage lamps throughout your home and switch to bright lights only in reading and working areas or as needed. This can translate to a more relaxing atmosphere.
- **Have a common activity area.** Light-intensive activities can be done in a common area that many can share simultaneously, rather than in individual rooms. This way you only need a few lights for everyone. Instead of having to light a corner of his bedroom, dad could probably read his favorite book on a couch in the same place where the kids are doing their assignments. If at all possible, make use of daylight through wide windows, skylights and vents.
- **Practice smart/surgical lighting.** It is not reducing the number of fixtures in the house that is really important. It is managing their use that is crucial. Having only one light fixture in the middle of a room does not necessarily mean lower electric bills. It is better to have a task light for reading or other concentrated activity and dispensable lights that turn on and off automatically as needed, such as inside closets and cabinets. In this way, your light source is closer to the task at hand, thereby optimizing the use of electric power.
- **When having your house designed, list down your requirements and give them to your architect.** Have a furniture and activity layout set even before planning your lighting system. Identify which areas must be bright. You should ask for designs for three different lighting levels, for normal everyday use, for special events like parties, and for security or area lights which you can leave on all night. Do not hesitate to ask your architect to explain your lighting system, including its effect and practicality.
- **Make use of available gadgets in the market that may help you manage your lighting more effectively.** These include dimmer switches and motion sensor switches, which reduce the length of time your perimeter lamps stay on since they will only activate when they detect motion within a certain range or at a certain time. This gives the perception that there are people inside the house who are still awake and alert. Automatic switches which are activated when opening and closing a door are very practical for storage rooms and closets. Some energy is wasted when lights are left on in these rooms accidentally. Fortunately, this kind of switch is cheaper than the regular one.

It may be high time to evaluate your lighting system if you have not done so yet. You may be able to reduce your energy consumption by more than 50 percent, reduce heat emissions in the process, and end up with more dramatic lighting effect. And don't forget the best tip of all: compared to the most sparkly Christmas lights, a sincere smile always shines brighter.

For your comments, e-mail to marcosdeguzman@yahoo.com.

Exploring Frank Lloyd Wright's Robie house

DESIGN DIMENSIONS

Isabel Berenguer Asuncion

FRANK LLOYD WRIGHT HAS ALWAYS been one of my favorite architects. The designs he conceived in the early 1900s when the use of concrete and masonry was new technology, were way ahead of their time. I first saw some of his work in old design magazines when I was still exploring the possibility of a design course for university, and marveled at how he managed to play with volumes of masses in the exterior in ways unlike any of his contemporaries could.

A visit to Wright's Robie house in Hyde Park, Chicago, was one of the highlights of my recent visit to this architecturally diverse community. The Robie house was completed in 1909 and is considered one of the best examples of Prairie style architecture. Prairie style was influenced by the American Midwest and characterized by horizontality—volumes that seemed to crouch down low and close to the ground rather than rise from it, as did the flat and expansive prairie landscape itself. Wright expressed this through the floating volumes, suppressed chimneys, low and widely sheltering roofs, horizontal brick patterns and accents.

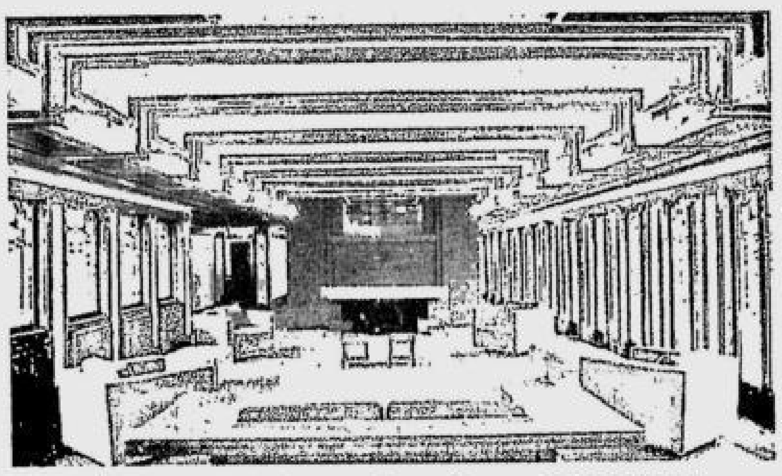
Horizontality

As I saw, the horizontality on the outside is carried through into the interior spaces. The ceilings are kept very low, especially at the ground floor foyer where it is meant to discourage guests from lingering too long. Toward the stair area, the ceilings climb a little higher to encourage movement through the stair and into the second floor areas where the main living spaces of the house are located. Up in the main living floor, rooms streamed from one area into another, having flowing rather than compartmentalized spaces.

Doors and windows had stained glass panels ornamented with prairie designs that were derived mainly from traditional Native American patterns. Furniture is streamlined and devoid of any ornamentation, much unlike the classic European pieces so popular in the American-Victorian homes of that era. Their lines were very geometric, emulating the contemporary lines of the architecture.

Interesting features

There are some features that are quite interesting in the interiors. The woodwork patterns on the walls climb onto the ceilings, thereby defining the planes as one element all together. This was a new concept at that time when planes were defined as separate design elements. In the living room, ceilings have recessed lighting covered with fretwork and a blue glass panel. This light was meant to be used at night. Its effect was a bluish glow, much like the light cast by a full moon!



THE MAIN living room of the Robie house, where wall and ceiling elements fuse into one

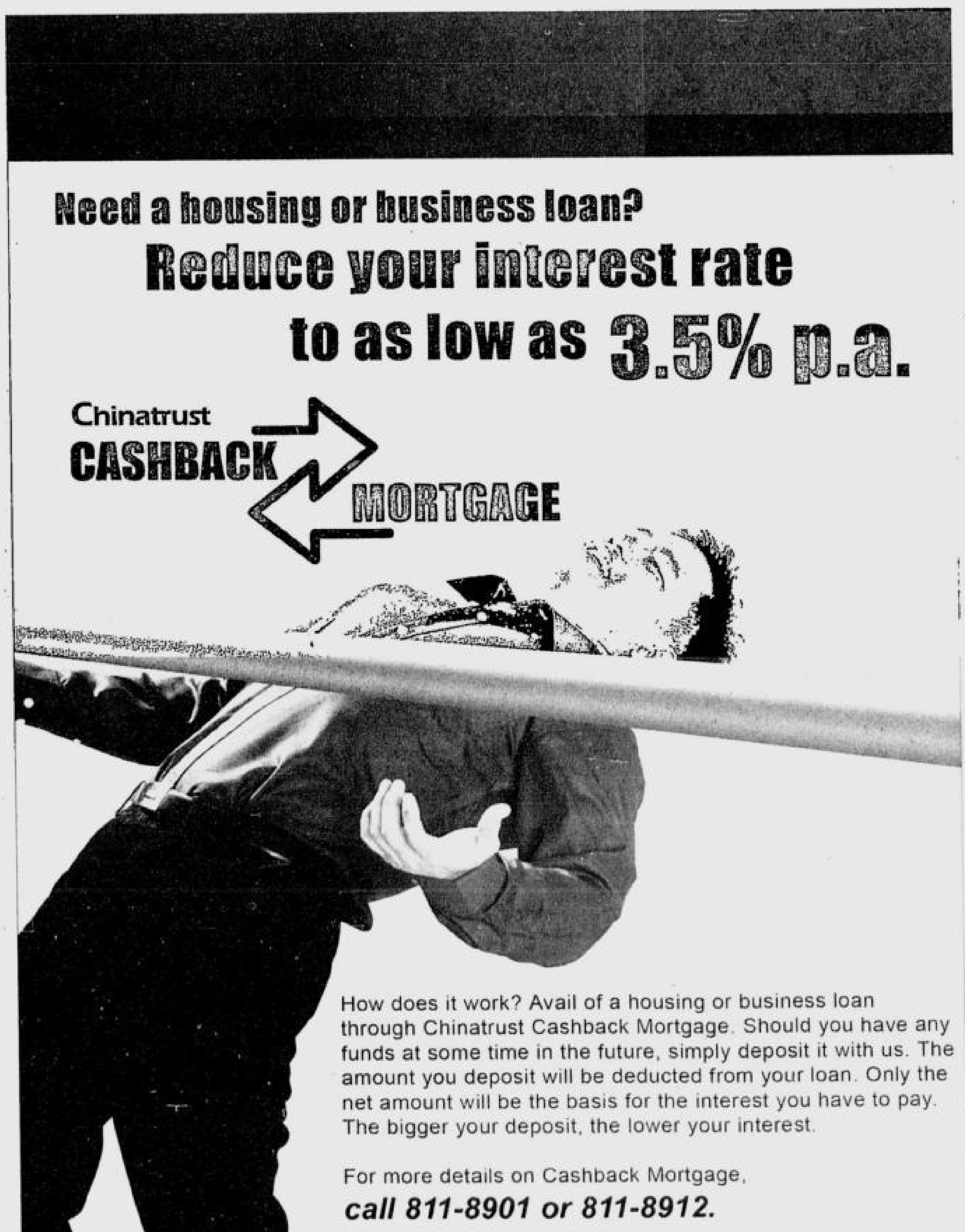
The other light fixtures, meant to be used during the daytime, are round balls of glass with incandescent bulbs inside, that shine a bright light that emulates sunlight. This was something about Wright's work that I never read in the books, the concept of having artificial daylight and night light.

Patches of paint

As we walked through the rooms, patches of paint were being tested on the walls and ceilings. Again, another surprise: whereas published photos of the Robie house showed white walls, the original colors were in hues of earth colors: the ceiling was in a sand tone and walls were in an earthy salmon. Wright's original intent was to bring the warm colors of the exterior—the terra cotta shades of the brick and the sand-colored accent bands—into the inside.

Our guide explained that since its restoration project started a few years back, the University of Chicago that now owns the Robie house, has been striving to be faithful to Wright's original design of the house. Unseen to the naked eye was the full integration of all the utility systems—heating, cooling, plumbing and electrical work—into the home, so that all the provisions were properly designed into the other elements of the house interiors.

Wright once said that architecture and design are "the triumph of human imagination over materials, methods and men, to put man into possession of his own earth." At the Robie house, he clearly practiced what he preached.



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The dining room implies family harmony, wealth

By Tess S. Samaniego

AS THE HOLIDAYS DRAW NEAR, Filipinos are kept busy not only with gift giving but also with feasts and get-togethers.

In the case of family gatherings, it is the dining room which gets all spruced up as it becomes the heart of the house during those festive, celebrated moments.

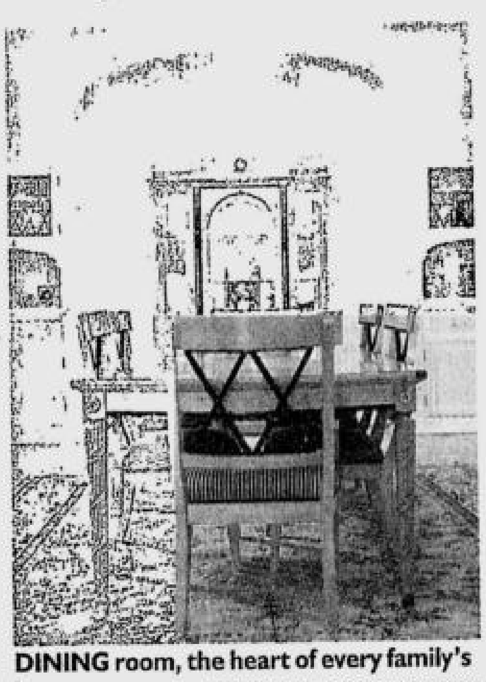
Normally, a dining room is probably one of the most intimate rooms in a house where the family shares over a meal their most serious conversations as well as their lightest moments.

For a typically busy family, a dining room would be the best place for members to update each other about their plans and lives.

According to Kathryn Weber, publisher of the Red Lotus Letter Feng Shui E-Zine, the dining room connotes health, family harmony and wealth.

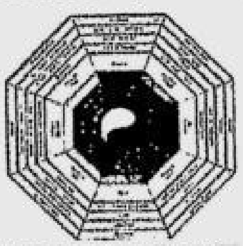
To maintain harmony and balance in your dining room, especially during this season, let me share with you some feng shui dos and don'ts to make your dining experience more pleasurable and enjoyable.

- **Display your china and crystal.** The dining room is a place of wealth, so it is always auspicious to display your family crystal, china, or silver. It is also wise to consider adding mirrors to the back of a china cabinet to "double" the amount of crystal and china you have.
- **Have bright, beautiful lighting.** A stunning, fine-looking chandelier is a wonderful addition to the dining room. If yours isn't bright enough or attractive to you, replace it with another fixture. Lighting is very auspicious.
- **Hang mirrors here.** Mirrors are stimulating and they double the good times by doubling the food and company in the room.
- **Keep the dining room private.** Avoid having the dining room seen from the front door. This can cause a loss of wealth.
- **Take clocks out of the dining room.** Keep in mind that the passage of time is not important while you are enjoying a good meal in the company of those closest to you.



DINING room, the heart of every family's home. WWW.REDLOTUSCONSULTING.COM

- **Don't eat with the dead.** This seems obvious, yet many people have pictures of deceased relatives in the dining room. Worse yet, are urns of ashes of loved ones! Avoid doing this because it creates an extremely yin dining experience and that can create health problems and strain good family relationships.



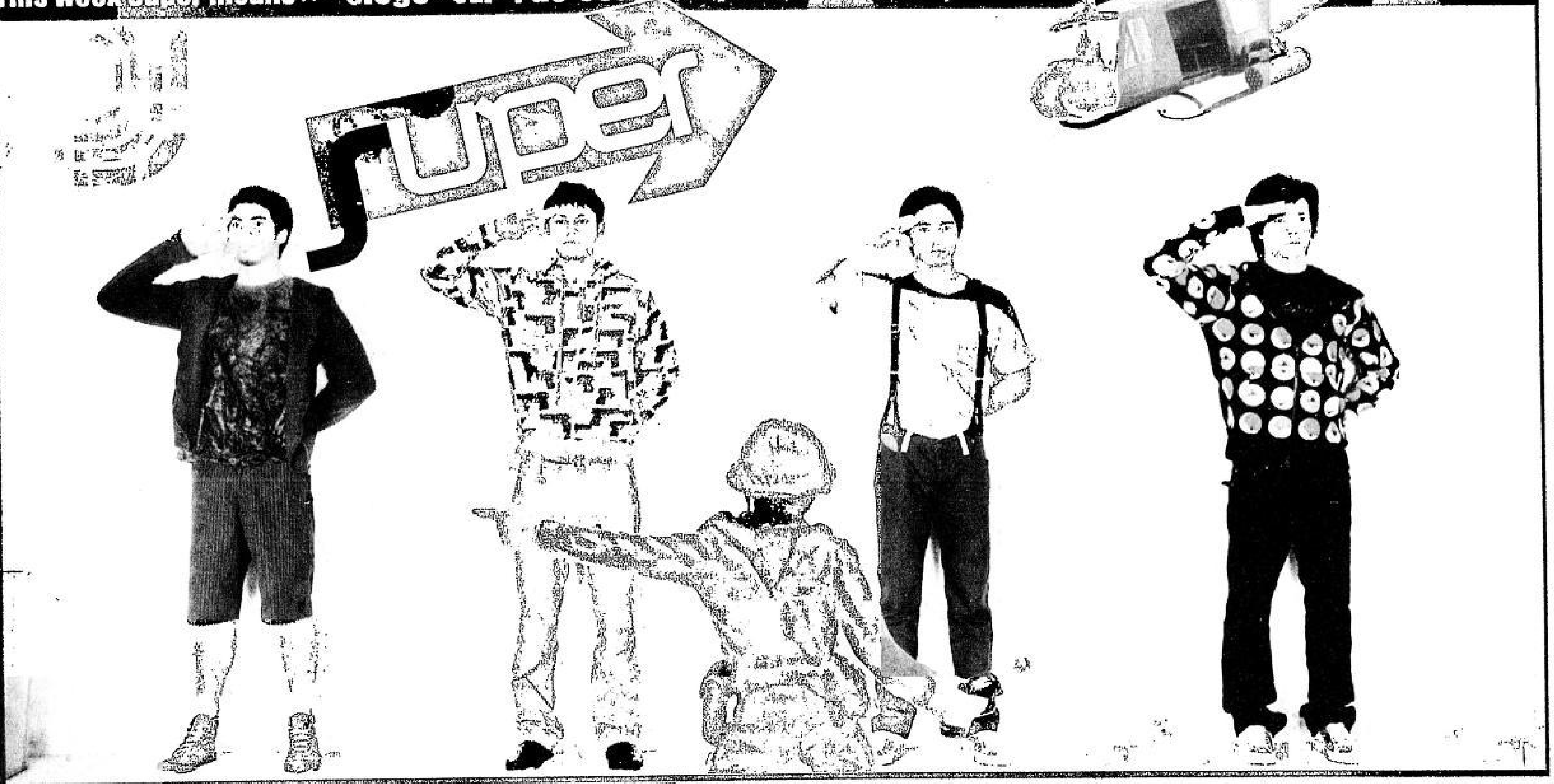
- **Don't eat with animals.** In the dining room, it's better not to have animals—real or otherwise. If you have pictures of birds or statues of animals, better remove them and put it in another location. Animals symbolically eat your food.
- **Don't display sad art.** Remove sad images since dining with your family should be a fun and happy experience. Everyone should be happy at the dining table.

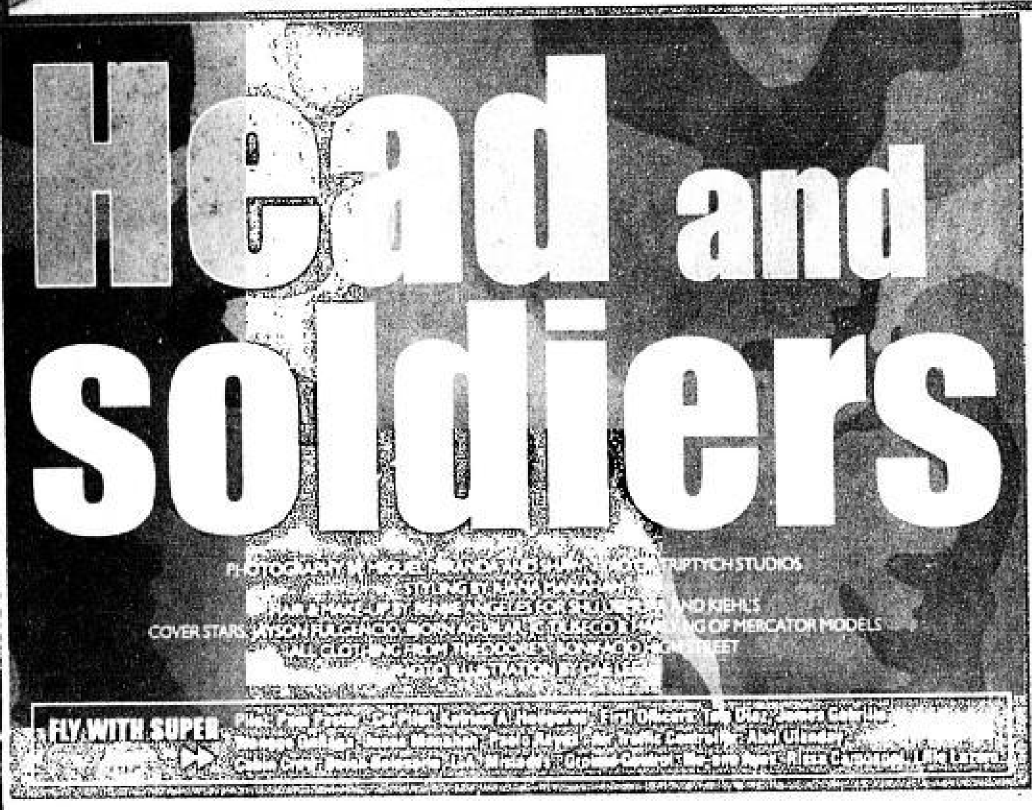
Since the dining room is almost always the most beautiful room in the house, complete with gleaming silver, sparkling crystal and beautiful chandeliers and furnishings, it is wise to always remember that the dining room's most important feng shui element is to actually dine there.

(Source:www.redlotusconsulting.com)

This week Super means » Siege• Uzi• Pas-coun• Empower• ebel

CAMP WITH SUPER





Head and soldiers

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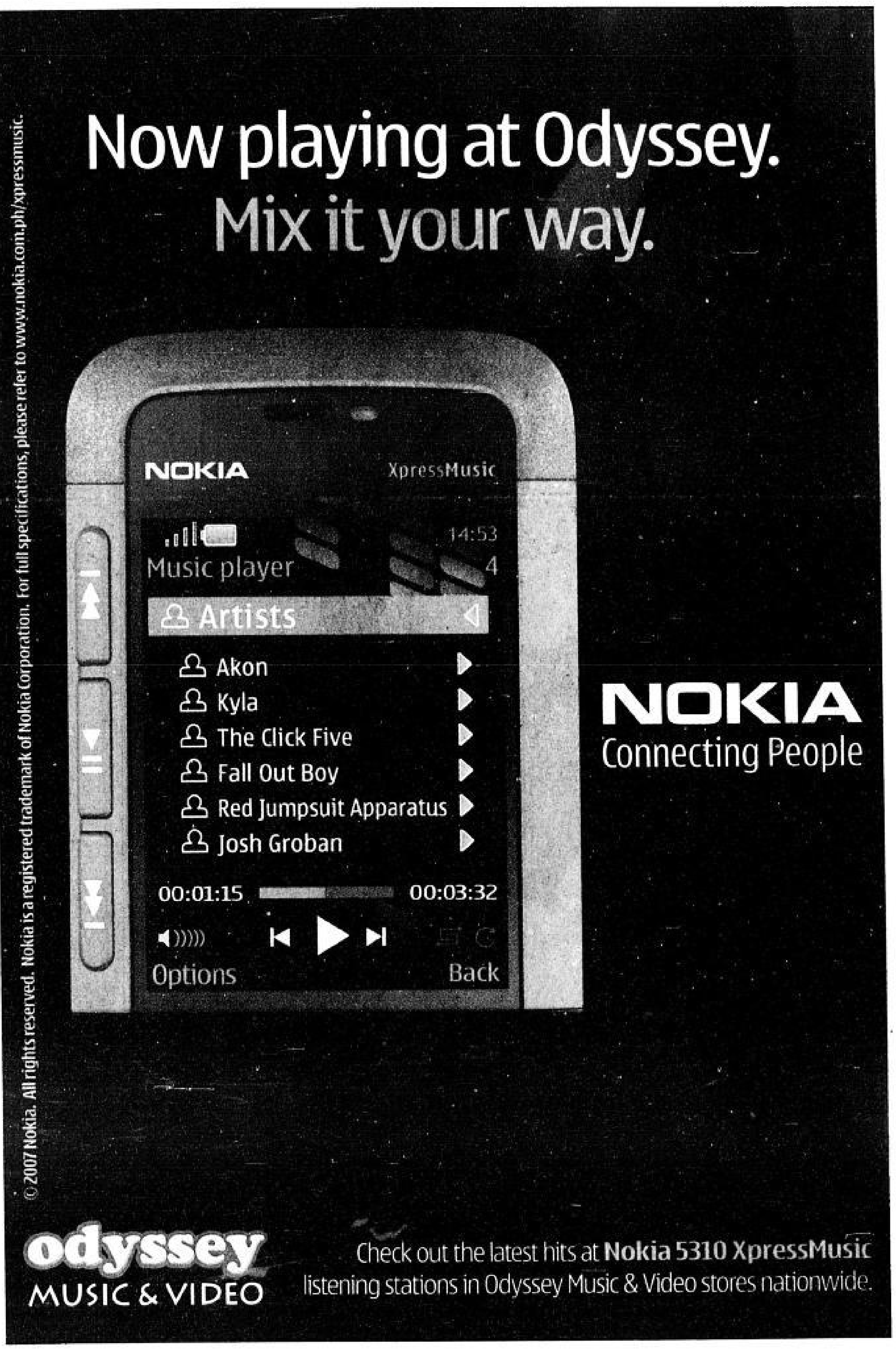
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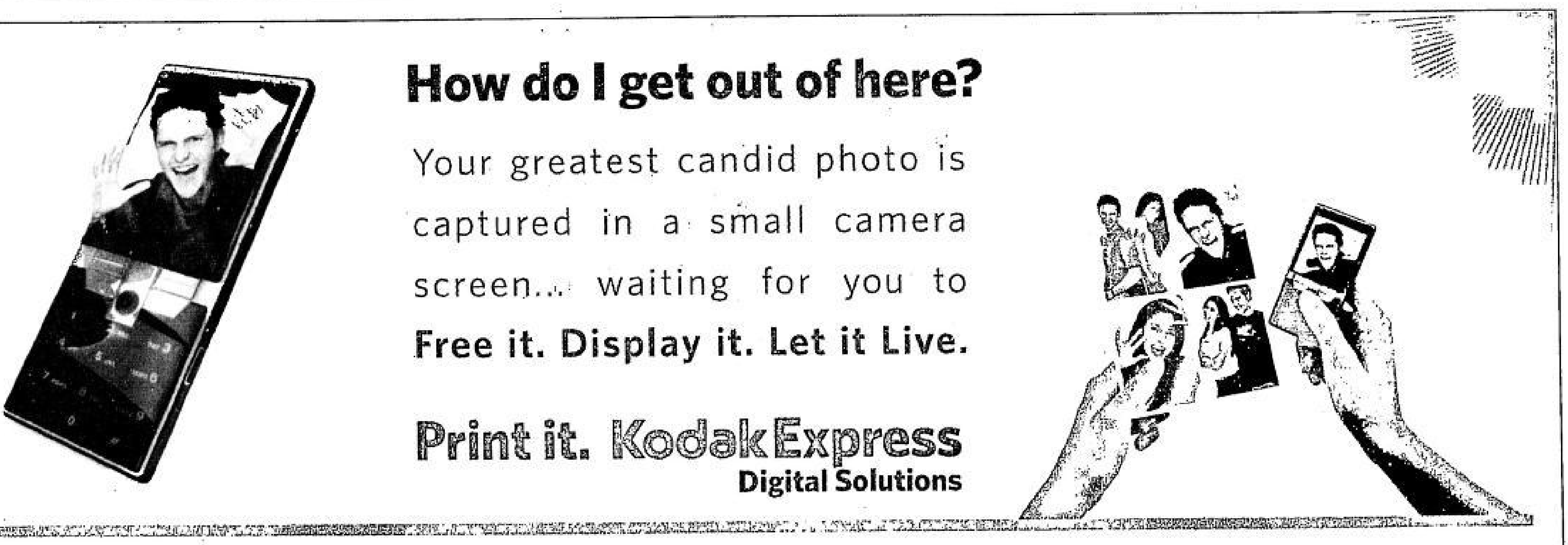
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BLACK SHIRT WITH CRYSTAL DETAIL BY DE PUTA MADRE
SWISS EYES HOODIE BY KID ROBOT

OW, Philippines

OUT THE WINDOW

Tals Diaz

IT'S GOOD TO KNOW THAT in times of national crisis, we haven't lost concern for our fellow men. Testament to this is the slew of anxious text messages I received on the day of the coup now officially dubbed in Wikipedia as "The Manila Peninsula Mutiny." Here's a brief rundown of the texts from those bastions of patriotism:

"Oh my God curfew! We're in Victoria Court for a bachelorette party. Our strippers are stressed. They wanna go home!"

"Kaya palang lakarin ang Manila Pen mula sa Makati Regional Court."

"Ces Drilon has a very Blair Witch Project style of reporting. Minus the snot. And what's with the leopard print headband?"

"Pas-coup na naman!"

"That was the GAYEST coup attempt EVARR. Pity those tourists in the Manila Pen. First the earthquake, then the typhoon, now this. Welcome to Manila, beyotches!"

"Yay! National crisis is over! Come to the kick off party!"

"Marc Nelson is so hot. *Yan ang* Wow Philippines!"

Now that is what I call a bourgeois revolution. Is it any wonder why no one marched to Edsa?

Welcome to Manila

To dispel my bad mood that day because of the circus-slash-telenovela-like state of our country (and because I have not had a curfew since I was in high school), I channel-jumped to AXN that night (at least the curfews post-martial law are more bearable with cable TV). It was Episode Two of Amazing Race Asia, with our very own intrepid duo of Rovilson Fernandez and Marc Nelson carrying the national flag. This was the continuation of the race's Manila jaunt, after the competitors had digested the duck feathers and beaks from the previous episode's *balut*-eating challenge at Plaza Miranda. "This is supposed to be an aphrodisiac!" exclaimed one of the Asian racers to encourage his partner, right before she barfed out her half-formed embryo into a pail.

In this episode, the racers from all over Asia (including Singapore, Thailand, Indonesia, Malaysia, Taiwan, Hong Kong and Japan) were tasked to navigate through the dizzying streets of Manila. It was no surprise that Team Rovi and Marc (aka Magnum P.I.) practically breezed through the challenges, being street savvy connoisseurs of the bedlam.

"In Manila," said the effervescent Marc Nelson, still in host mode, "the taxi drivers will find any space to fit four wheels. Even spaces where you can't fit four wheels."

The racers made their way to Laguna where they had to steer a carabao around a muddy field. It was a breeze for The Marc, who should add "Carabao Whisperer" to his growing resume. It wasn't that easy for the rest, though, because our indigenous carabaos were secretly trained to listen only to Pinoys, and Marc Nelson. It was not the best moment either for Sophie from Hong Kong, whose carabao had digestive problems and fertilized the soil near her foot. Craptastic!

Feeding frenzy

Next challenge! Take the bus. Which is a really easy task in most other cities, but a challenge in ours because once in a while, the bus stops in the middle of the highway, and the half-naked driver will go under the bus to singlehandedly fix the problem. The female racers from Malaysia were freaking out at this point, in spite of the peaceful, indifferent and uncomplaining passengers inside the bus who are just so used to crises of this nature.

"Filipinos are very resilient people," chirps Marc Nelson once again. He and Rovilson were way ahead of the pack. For their next challenge, they had to go to Star Mart to pick up boxes of donation goods and load them onto the jeepney. They headed to the Nuestra Sra. de Luisa Children's Center, to deliver the food to orphaned children. Aww, cute little things aren't they? That is, until they turned into bloodthirsty vultures on a feeding frenzy the second a box of food was thrown in their midst. Rovilson, I believe, was saying something about cherishing those heartwarming moments of giving, except he had to run away or one of those kids would have munched on his biceps.

Over to Santa Cruz, by the Carriedo LRT Station, where the racers had to choose between the task of matching 250 pairs of shoes from a messy pile, or assembling a bicycle. By this time, the teams had attracted a gaggle of *usiseros* who were cheering them on, especially since the female racers were bent over, unaware that their ample cleavages were showing. By this time, my mobile phone had bleeped with another text message:

"Shyet, nakakahiya."

You know, I had no idea what that text had referred to, the coup event or the TV show. What is the difference, anyway, in a country of a half-formed democracy, starving children, and creatures crapping all over our land, and a people so used to crises that they've grown indifferent. But chin up, folks! Take it from Marc Nelson—we Filipinos are very resilient people.

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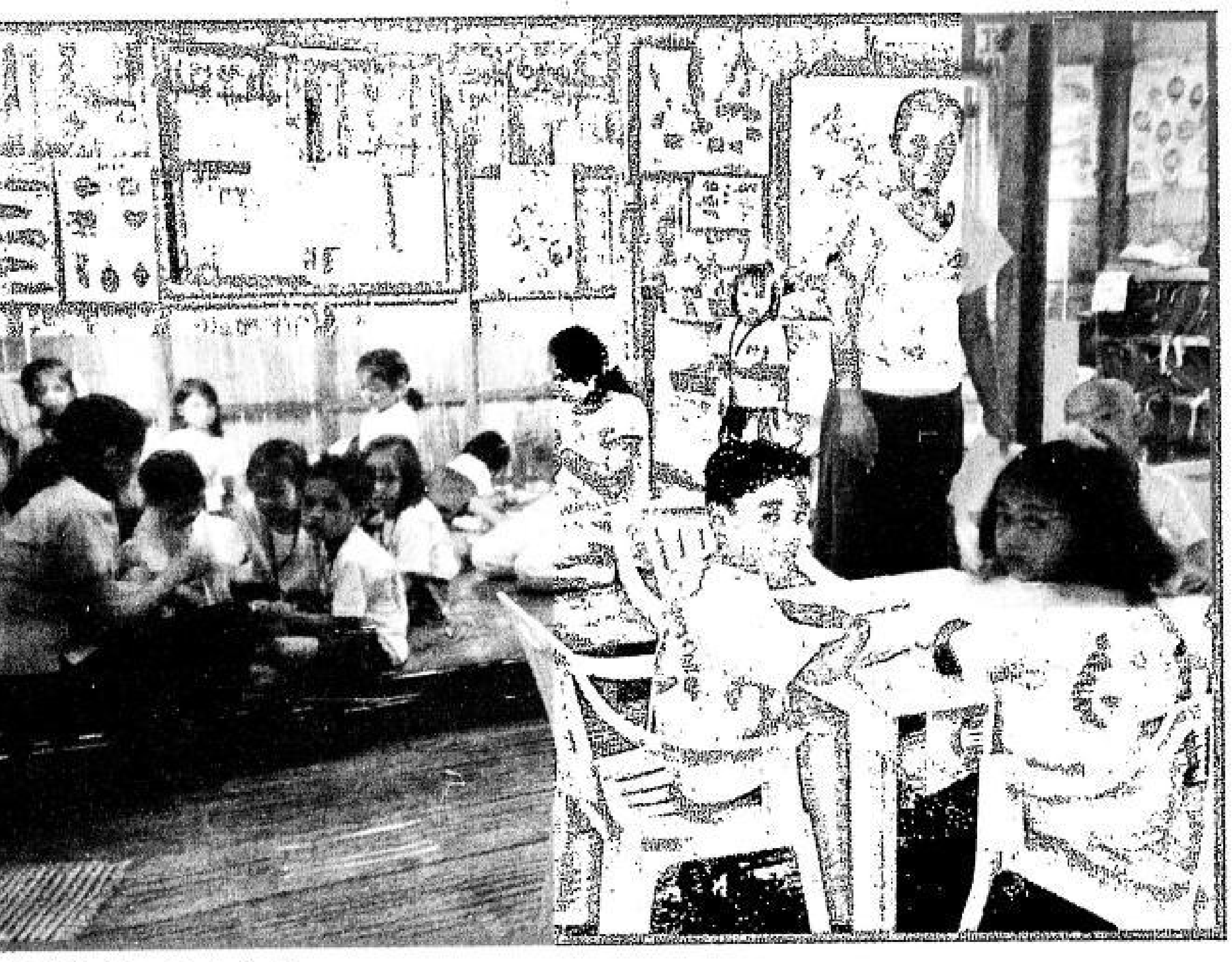
Feeding a future army



HUNGER leads to the dark side

Text and photos by Katrina A. Holigores

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Experience Hong Kong's Winter Delights

[illegible] your calendars as the Hong Kong Tourism Board welcomes the much-awaited Christmas extravaganza, the 2007 Hong Kong WinterFest. Come celebrate the holidays with your loved ones in Asia's World City and enjoy the ultimate holiday cheer and merrymaking at its finest.

The mega-event, now on its sixth consecutive year, will run until January 1, 2008. The celebration promises to be a fun-filled spectacle, transforming the city into a cheery, festive, winter wonderland. Dazzling events and activities abound, enabling everyone to enjoy the warmth and joyful celebrations in Hong Kong during the festive season.

Expect one-of-a-kind animated illuminations covering the famous skyscrapers on both side of Victoria Harbour, as well as the streets and malls that sparkle with themed decorations as the city takes on a carnival atmosphere. The city's different districts vie for attention with festive events and special surprise performances on weekends. All around town, shops spread Christmas cheer with winter sales and special offers on every kind of gift imaginable, while restaurants serve up seasonal delights, delicious food promotions and special deals for visitors.

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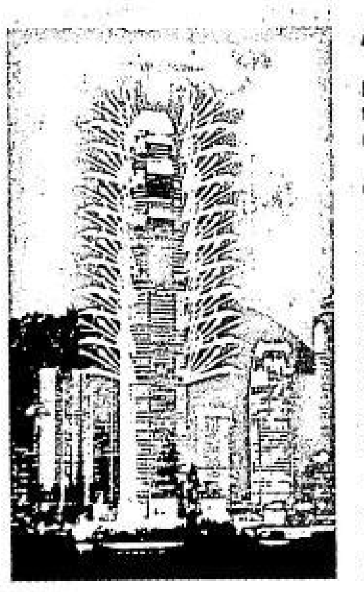

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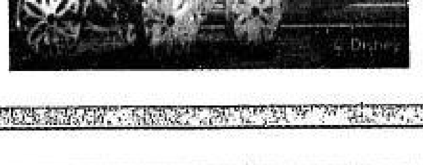

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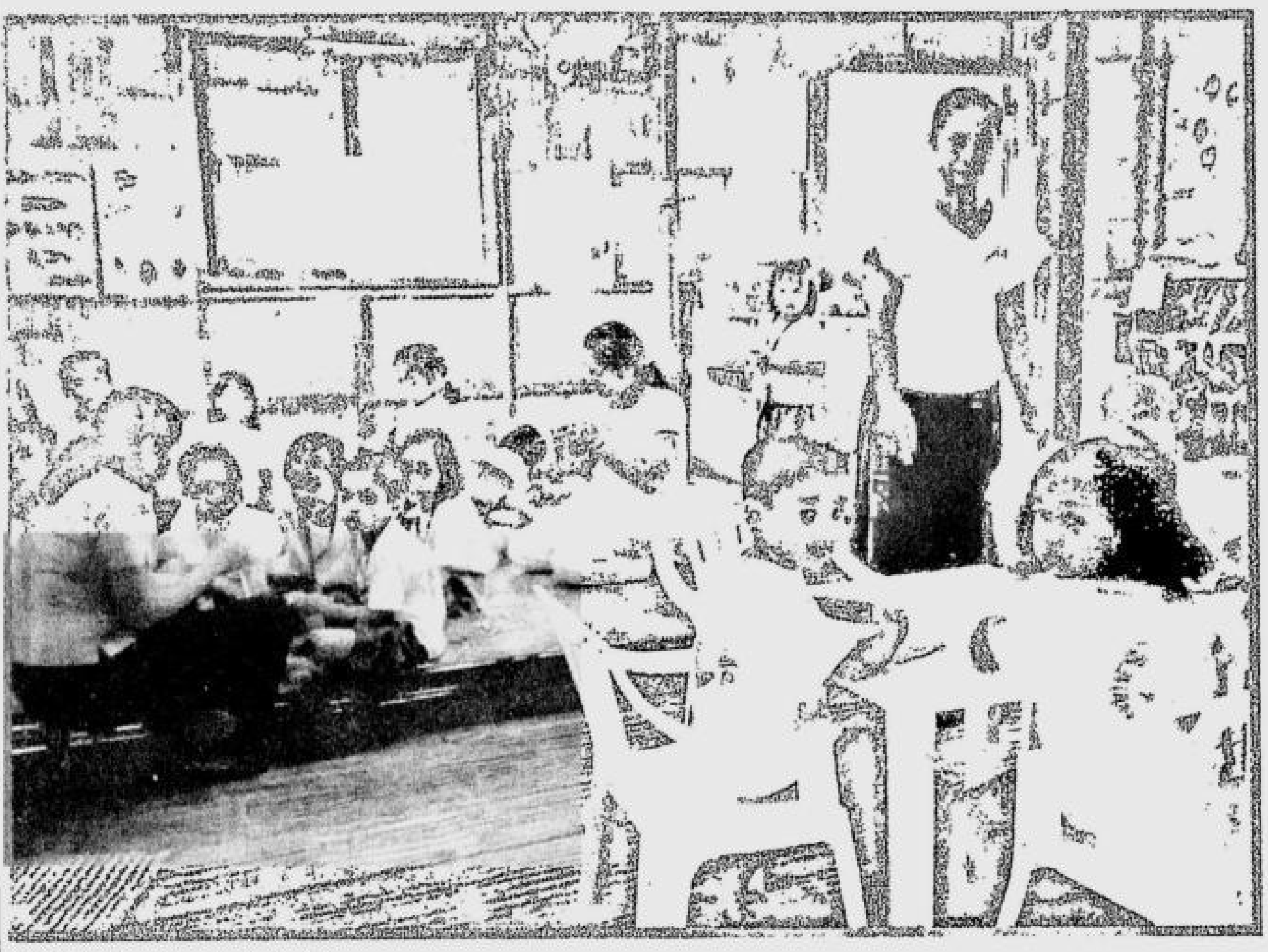
Feeding a future army



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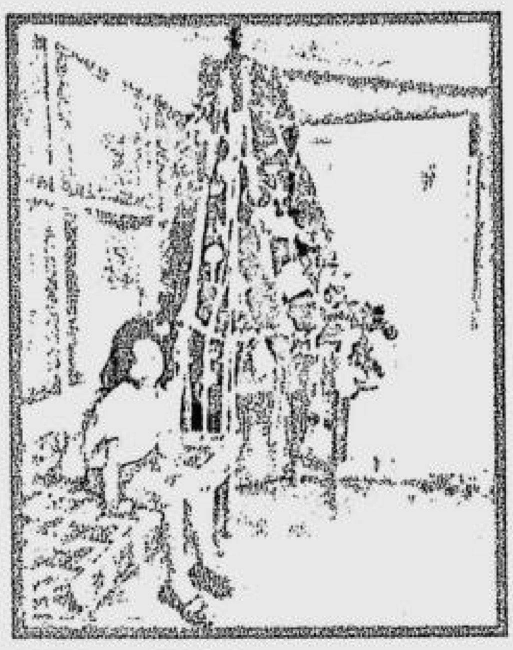

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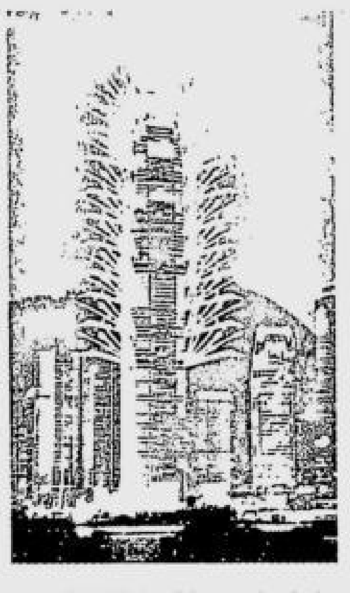

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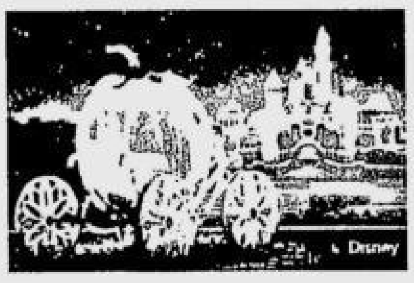

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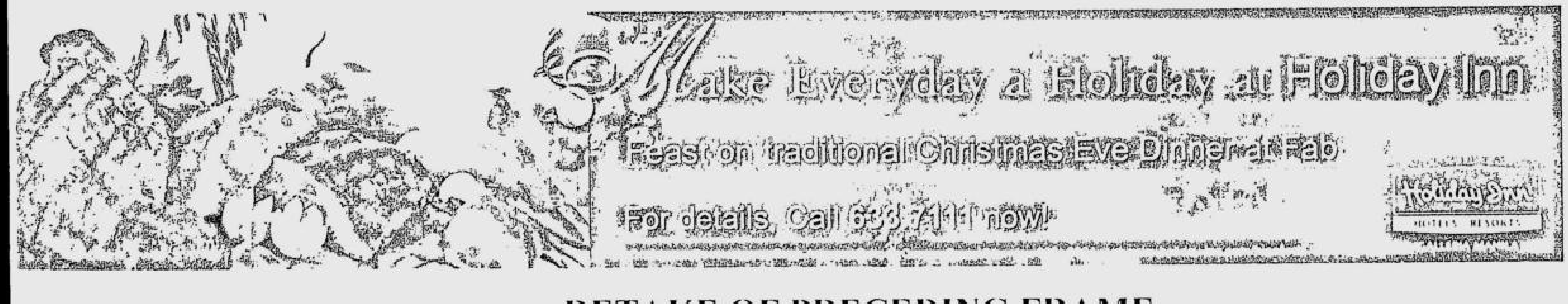

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RETAKE OF PRECEDING FRAME

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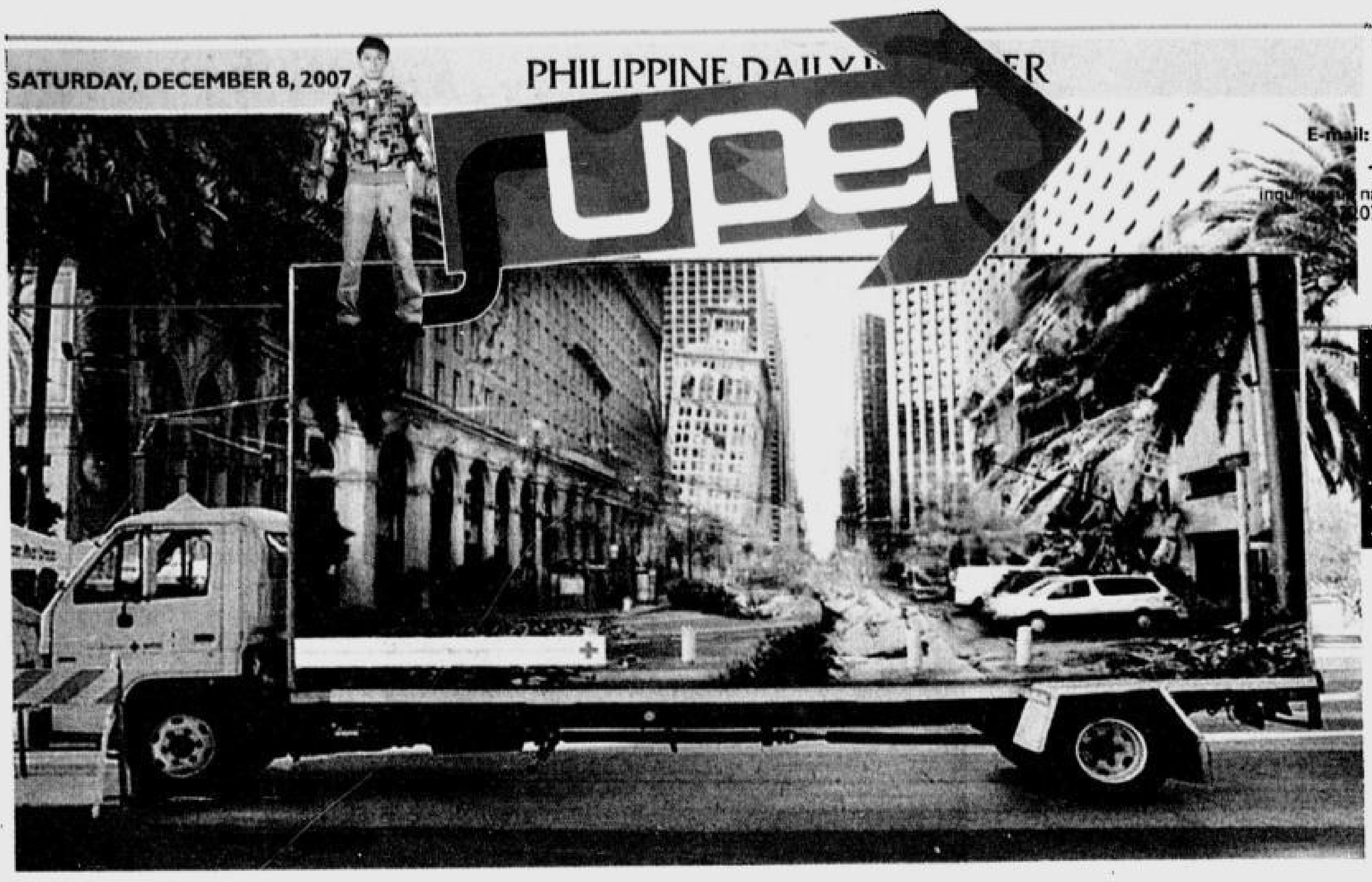

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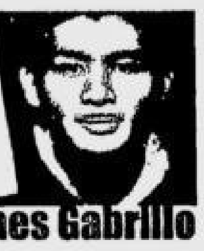
Counterculture strikes back

THUNDER ROAD



James Gabrillo

These four little efforts—done in superstyle—make the world a better place

I HAVE ALways admired rebellion. Strength, pluck, impetuousness, and uncompromised vision—I look up to those who are capable of putting these words into reality, to those who dare to see past the present.

History tells us that it's hard to be a rebel. To live like one means to reek of failure and self-destruction. When most of our cultural heroes were becoming such, they were misfits who were making people exceedingly nervous.

Yet these days, to be a rebel in a materialistic amoral world is less about being an outsider, an outcast or a prototypical underdog. It's more about continually challenging the mechanisms that generate art, film, music, and more.

March like you care

It's been said that cinematically, musically, artistically, culturally, our society has sidetracked human beings from knowing what it really means to care. A lot of entries in today's pop culture menu are being labeled as "groundbreaking" for frontally criticizing current conventions. From the no-logo look of our celebrities to the rise of the hipsters, culture today is being equated with stylish revolt. Some of today's sounds, for example, define resistance, spreading a message few political leaders can match. But as much as a revolution isn't always positive, being good is not just about being rebellious.

A hundred push-ups

In these crazy times, we should champion the ability of counterculture to wipe out the pseudo-hip, empty ways of the mainstream. There are other better alternatives out there. We learn how to make good choices by knowing what's out there—by looking closer at the little details of everyday living; by venturing to environments and situations we never thought we'd be a part of, like doing acts of service to a total stranger.

COUNTERCULTURE/ D2

Healthy, Hearty Holiday

Indulge in the wholesome freshness of our bountiful harvest. Ripe and juicy, crisp and luscious, plump and tangy… oh so perfect for your daily diet this season.

So have yourself a fresh and fab Holiday only at Rustan's Supermarket!

Get Fresh & Fabulous this CHRISTMAS at Rustan's SUPERMARKET

Where shopping for food is a pleasure

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Farmer's Plaza | Marikina | Mercedes-Pasig
Sta. Rosa Laguna | Starmall | Zabarte-Caloocan

Counterculture strikes back

From page D1

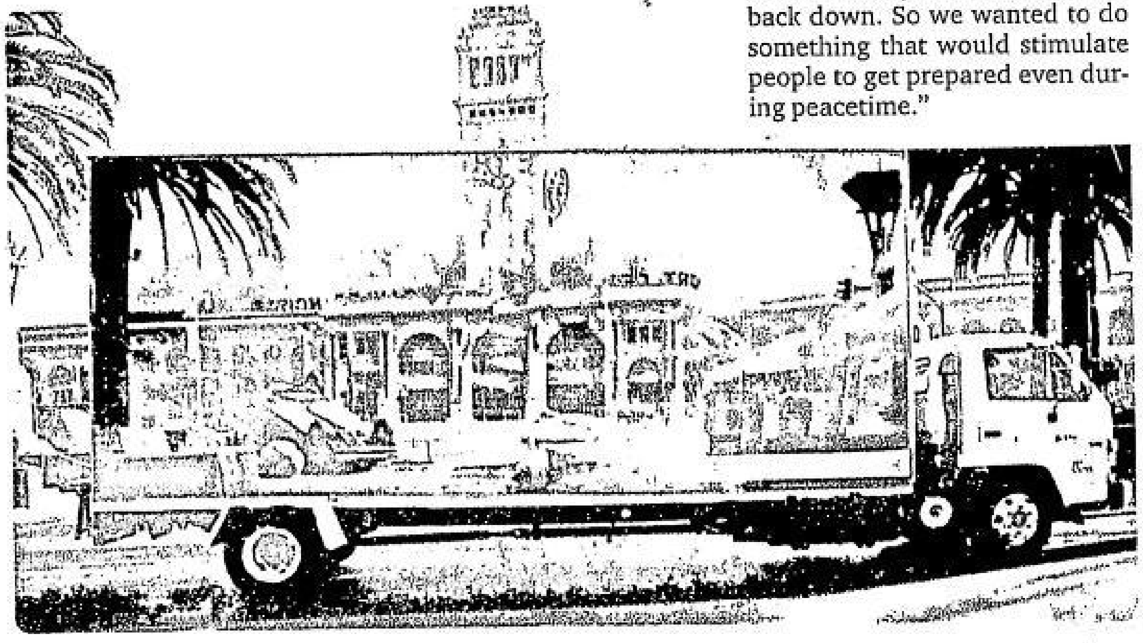
For better or for worse, these are times that present new and different ways of challenging people, systems, and notions. For the good of all—this is what rebellion should stand for.

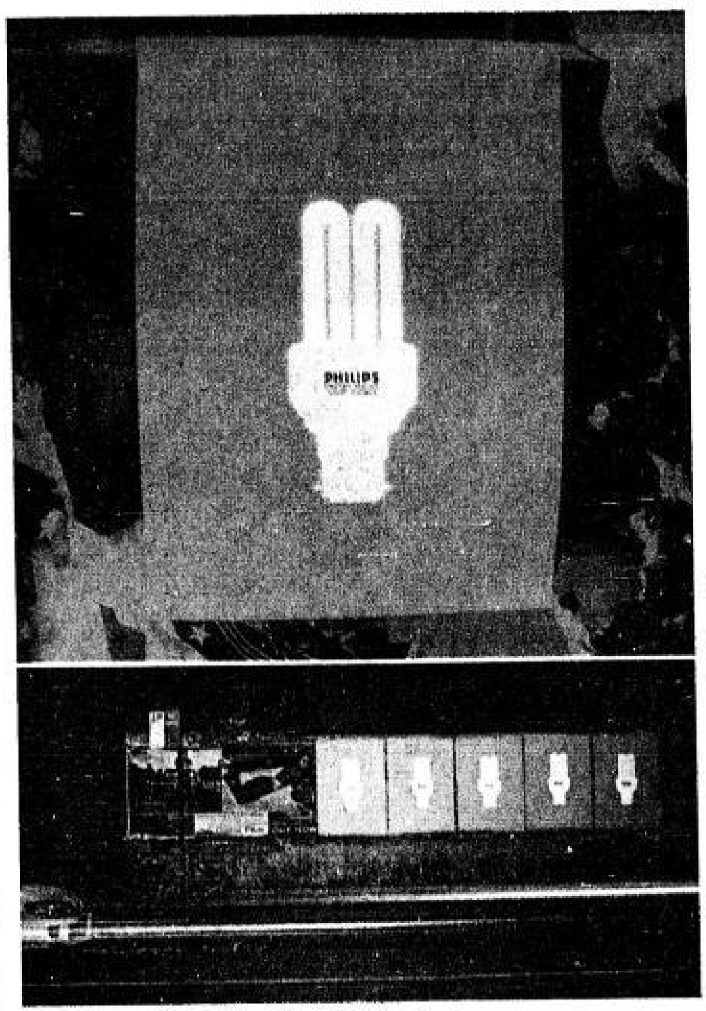
It cannot be denied that pop culture, or just plain culture, still serves as a good litmus test of our times. If so, then these five simple, little initiatives are proof that, at the very least, we are beginning to stir up the real revolution that we badly need.

Creating optical illusions

Currently touring the streets of San Francisco, Red Cross' mobile billboard is hands-down imaginative. Part of the Red Cross' campaign for earthquake readiness (its most aggressive one to date), the provocative mobile billboards were designed to drive people to immediate action using traditional and nontraditional media, including viral and guerrilla marketing tactics. The billboards show what busy areas might look like after a catastrophic earthquake, with downtown high-rises reduced to clouds of ash. Created by Publicis & Hal Riney, the campaign was built around the tagline "What do we have to do to get your attention?" The production on the next phase, which includes television ads, will begin next month.

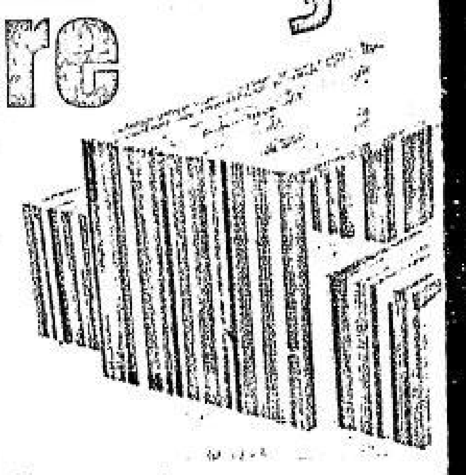
"The only thing that seems to get people's attention is when a catastrophic event takes place somewhere in the world," says Harold Brooks, chief executive of the Red Cross Bay Area Chapter. "When that happens, we see more people coming in to buy a kit or enrolling to take a course. But when the event starts to fade from memory, the numbers go back down. So we wanted to do something that would stimulate people to get prepared even during peacetime."





Save the poster, save the world

Nothing says good advertising like a touch of motivation paired with spunk. In an effort to instill awareness on conservation to its customers, Philips recently released its billboards with the image of their globe printed in glow-in-the-dark ink. With the Philips Energy Saving Poster, there's no more need for artificial lighting.



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mental impact with their work, the tw
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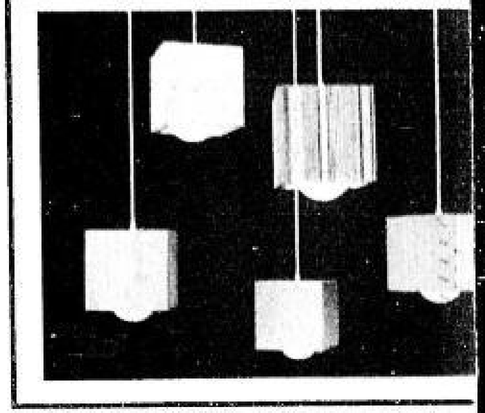
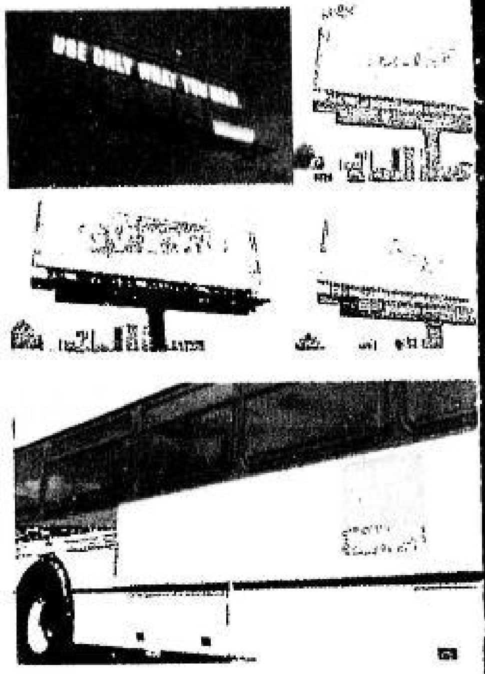
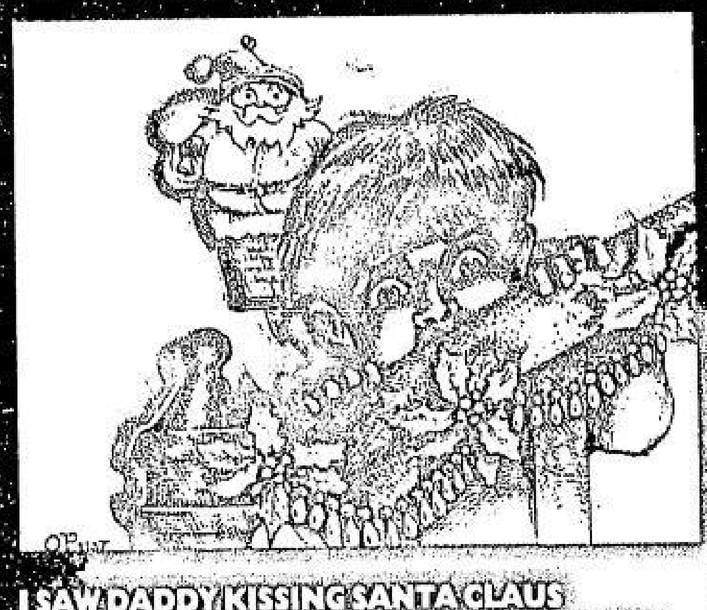
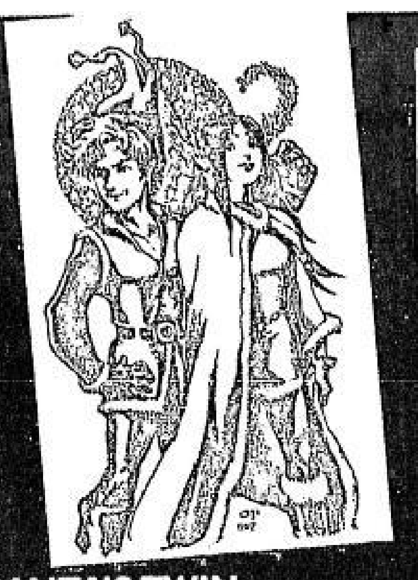


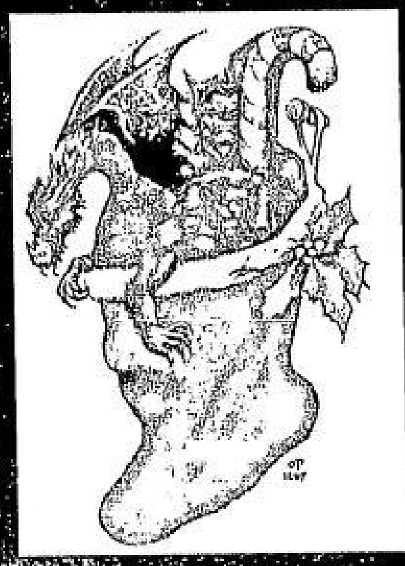




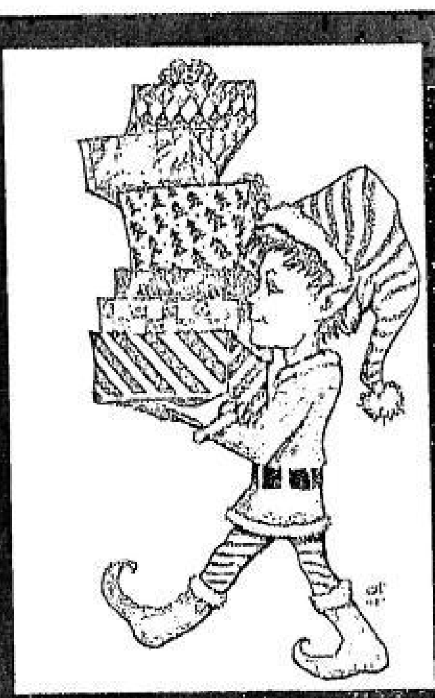
I SAW DADDY KISSING SANTA CLAUS
Remember the old song about a son witnessing his mother getting cozy with Santa? It's likely that he just witnessed his parents role-playing. Here, it's the boy's dad. It still works if titled differently.



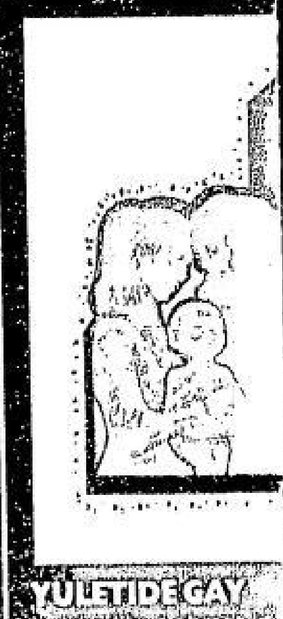
SANTA'S TWIN WONDERS
Interestingly, the Santa myth mutated to include other previously unrelated beings such as elves. Mrs. Claus can be part-elf. The kids, I call 'em Kriss and Nicola, might look this way. They're both naughty and nice, so it's hard to say who'll take over the family "business" one day.



HE GIVES COOL TOYS TOO
Why do kids in holiday flicks usually get generic toys on Christmas day? It would be nice to see Santa give other gifts, like monster action figures, for once.



ELFCHILD LABORER
Hmm, it's odd that some of the North Pole workers are sometimes depicted as kids. But since they're mostly elves, they must age differently. Maybe.



YULETIDE GAY
Inspired by a phrase in
ball A Merry Little Chris
drawing shows a mode
tableau of a non-tradit
equally valid family a
ple and their child cel
holidays quietly.

Saturday Seven

Swimming against the Yuletide

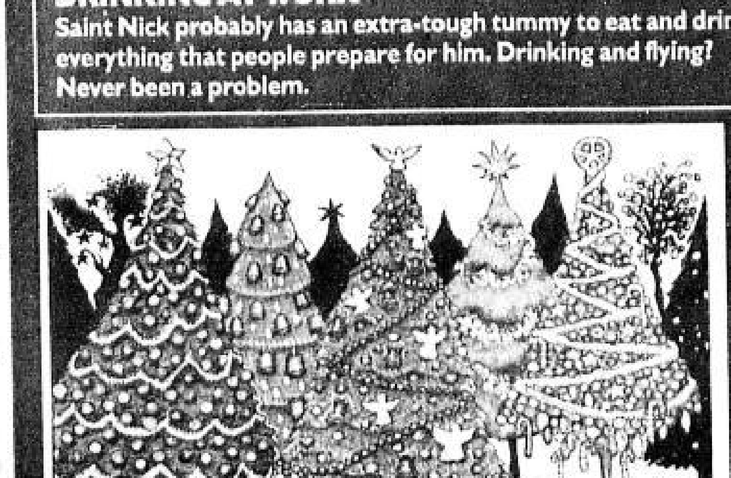
Text and illustrations
by Oliver M. Pulumbarit

I'M A NON-BELIEVER, YEAH, and I've blogged about it in detail a few times. But I can still appreciate the Christmas season for its emphasis on goodwill and togetherness. As an ex-Catholic, I still have vivid memories of Christmases past. Admittedly, I still find the imagery and revelries related to the holidays appealing, even when I don't believe in a messiah figure anymore. That's just how things are for me.

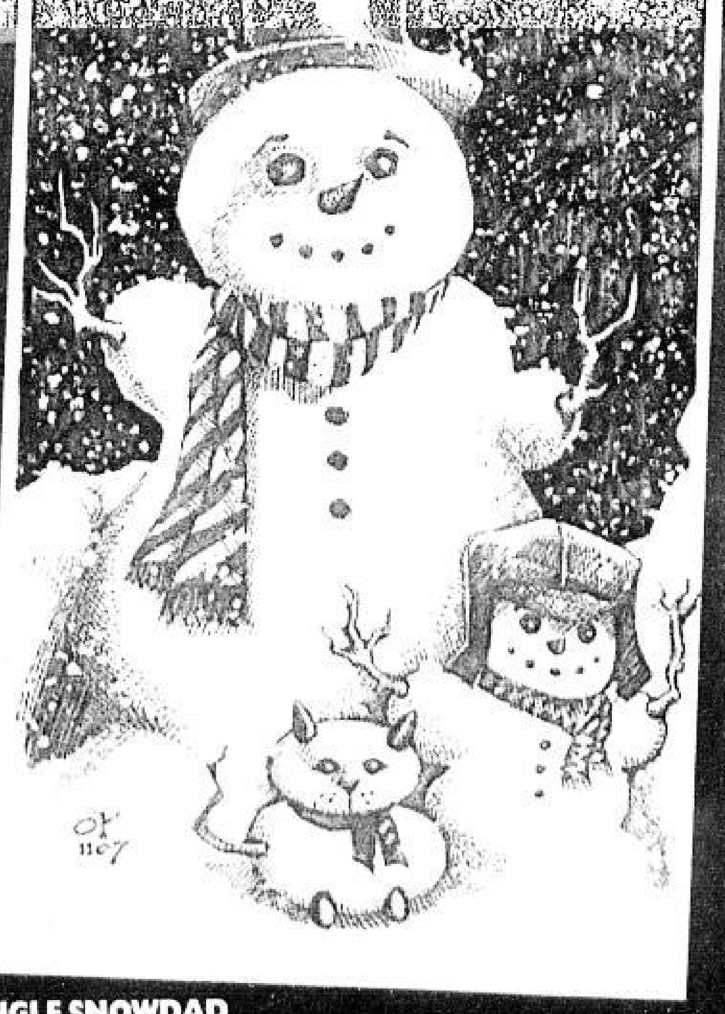
But you really can't escape the festivities, so while I'm not into "the reason for the season," I'm still appreciating the artistry and celebrations that come with December. I'm also a *ninong*, so I'm still part of the whole gift-giving scenario.

Just some months back, I planned to draw and post new Halloween drawings to prettify my site. But because of time constraints, I opted to draw a Christmas-themed set instead. I cut up bond-sized vellum paper in half, pulled out gel pens and markers and ended up with the following. Here's my take and thoughts on some holiday concepts.

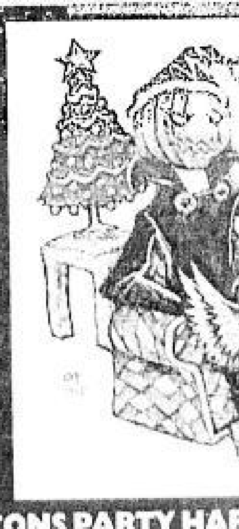
DRINKING AT WORK
Saint Nick probably has an extra-tough tummy to eat and drink everything that people prepare for him. Drinking and flying? Never been a problem.



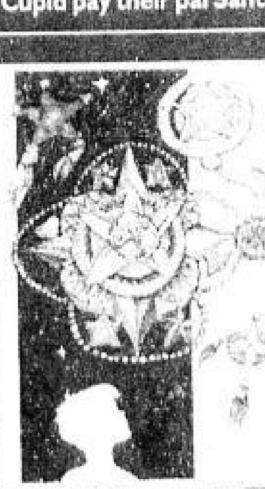
FESTIVE FOREST
Fake plastic trees are fun to assemble and decorate. Disassembling, removing ornaments and cleaning up usually take forever, though.



SINGLE SNOWDAD
The title was the last thing that came to me. Initially, it was just a drawing of a traditional snowman. There was space left for a kid and a pet, so they were included. Seeing them together suddenly inspired the title.



ICONS PARTY HAR
Holiday and feast day sym
break. Jack O'Lantern, Ea
Cupid pay their pal Santa



ALIEN STARLIGHT
Christmas lanterns with co
the simpler ones still look g
the *parol* can come in almos

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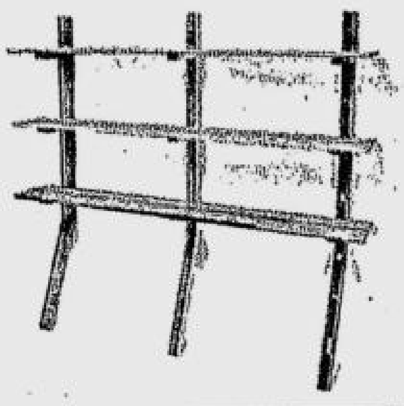
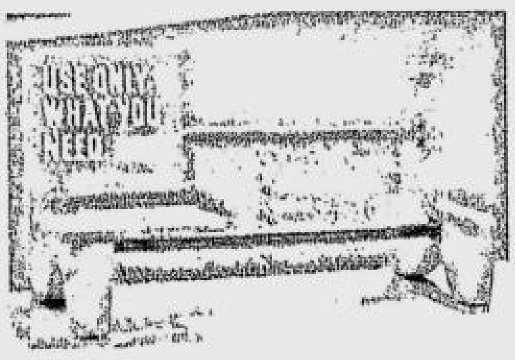
DISCARDED
RECOVERED

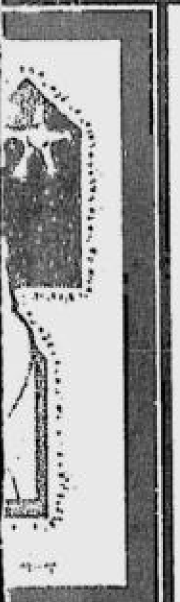
f designers Bart Bettencourt and Carlos Salgado,
f collecting and repurposing discarded scraps of
industry. Seeking to create a positive environ-
have produced a growing line of furniture. Nat-





Now, drink this

The guys at Sukle agency released this whole advertising campaign for Denver Water to inform people about the wise usage of water. Clever taglines were matched to a particular medium to produce these ads that made passers-by do a double-take.



Have Your-
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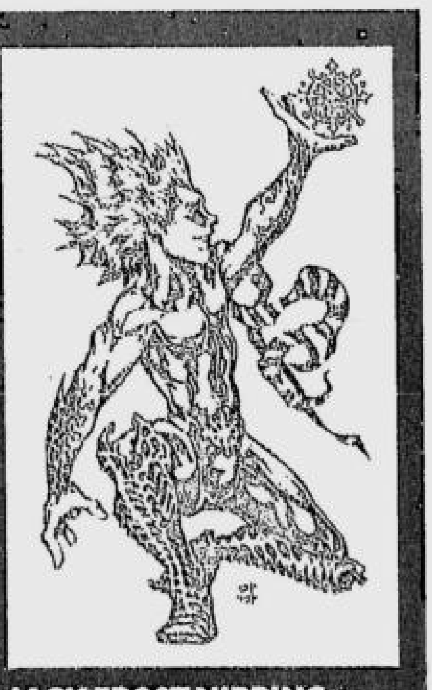
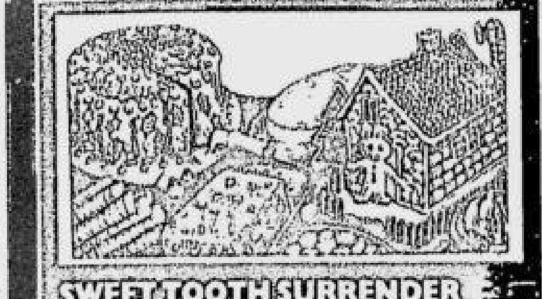


JACK FROST NIPPING
The mythical Jack Frost is commonly known as a snow-bringer. Like snowmen, he doesn't need a scarf, yes, but it works aesthetically on him, too.

OY
ols unwind during their annual Christmas
ster Bunny, Thanksgiving Turkey and Stoopid
visit.



SWEET TOOTH SURRENDER
Sugar high! Ditch the diet and devour those delightful desserts. By the way, fruitcakes are yummy. I know it's not just me.

orful, blinking lights are especially diverting, but
ood. The design possibilities are nigh-endless, as
t any shape, size and material.

The medium is the message

In one of its campaigns to help South Africa, Red Cross circulated actual water bottles which were empty. Pasted on the bottles was the note, "Try living on this for three days." Wow.

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With 3mg Melatonin
Sleepasil
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- Promotes normal sleep patterns
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In this season
of sharing,
share
what's cool & clean:
C2 Green Tea

From the first week of December, our calendar starts to be booked with one Christmas party after the other. And usually this means sharing deliciously rich feasts with friends and family. It's hard to stay healthy when there's just so much fabulous food tempting you. At least make sure you drink something that's good for you!

Make C2 Green Tea your Christmas drink. Delicately brewed from natural green tea leaves and bottled on the same day, C2 has the wonderful flavor of real green tea with all its healthy goodness. Green tea helps reduce the risk of heart problems and lowers high blood pressure. Instead of absorbing the cholesterol, green tea prompts the body to increase the amount of fat it releases. In a way, it helps undo all the effects of that holiday ham and other sinful dishes you're sure to be indulging in!

Be a good host and serve C2 Green Tea to your guests too! C2 has a great variety of flavors that caters to different tastes: green tea plain, lemon, apple, peach, strawberry, forest fruits, kiwi and lychee. You can offer individual servings with the 350 mL and 500 mL bottles. For the low-calorie and sugar-free Christmas fix, try the C2 Lite variants of apple, lemon and green tea plain. For the numerous gatherings and parties, C2 Liter is perfect for sharing!

In the true spirit of Christmas, part of every purchase of C2 bought from December 8 to 22 in Robinson's Cebu, Galleria and Ermita, Market! Market!, Tiendesitas, Alabang Town Center, Trinoma and Foodparks (Enterprise, LKG Tower and GT Tower) will be donated to World Vision, a humanitarian organization working to make the world a better place for underprivileged children.

Share something really good this season. Share C2 Green Tea.

World Vision
ROBINSONS Malls
ROBINSONS Galleria
TIENDESITAS
FOOD & ART GALERIE
FOOD ODYSSEY
foodpark

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MEMO	Most Promising Retailer, Fashion Apparel, 2004
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GOLDEN ABC, INC. is a Filipino fashion retail company that has all of its brands recognized and awarded by the Philippine Retailers Association and the Department of Trade and Industry.

GOLDEN ABC

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"MARITES ALLEN'S FENG SHUI WAYS TO WIN-Part 2"
[redacted]
WORLD OF FENG SHUI
TRIVIA:7 What is the first animal sign which crossed the River Lo as mentioned in Legend 3 of our article?
ANS: a)Ox b)Dragon c)Rat d)Boar
To join, SMART and GLOBE/SUN subscribers simply have to submit a one – time registration by keying in THESS REG <name/address/age/gender> (Ex. THESS REG Sona 8y/Gold St., Marikina City/27/F) and send it to 2861. To answer, Send THESS <letter> to 2861
Yesterday's answer: d) Twelve
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Per DTI NCR serial no. 4365 of 2007 Promo Period: Dec. 3, 2007 to Jan. 7, 2008

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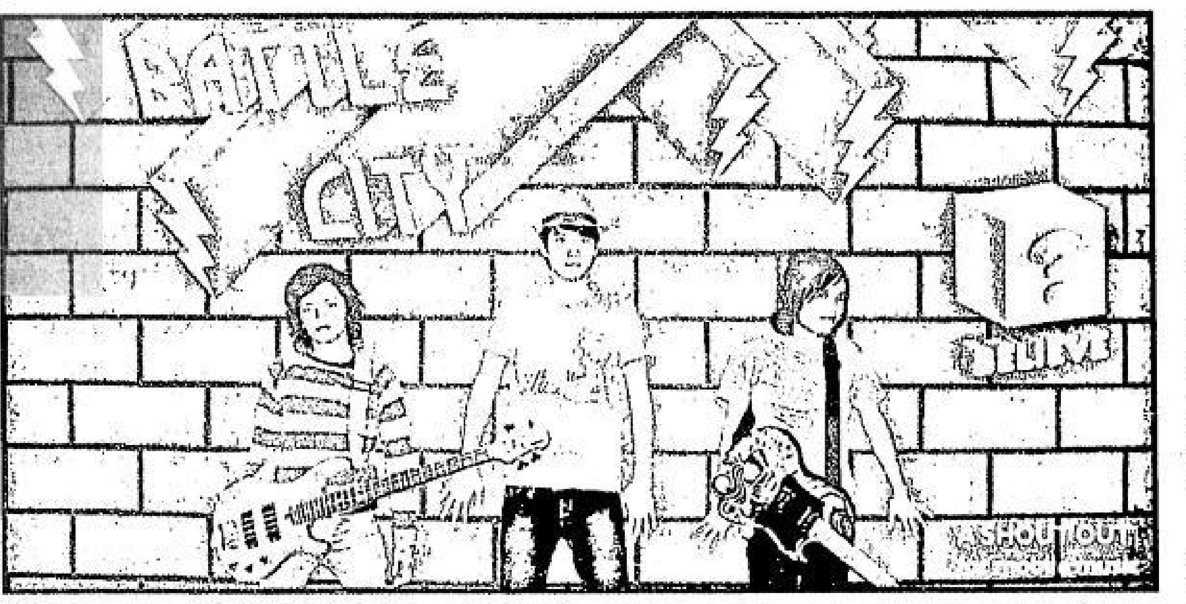
Musical wars



MADONNA WAS one of the first artists who used it.

Being the influential artist that she is, other musicians such as Sean Kingston, Cassie, James Blunt, and Lily Allen have turned copycats and logged in too.

Each day, more and more musicians have realized the immense power of the Internet in sharing music. Imagine being heard not only in your home turf but also across the globe with just a click of a button!

The Internet is definitely a godsend especially for independent artists who want to reach out to more people. They're like diamonds in the rough—you know they sound amazing and you trail them to every gig.

If only they can be heard by more people then they can really make it big in the music scene. Thanks to Nokia's Independent Artists Club (IAC), these artists now have a shot at amplifying their music, and sharing it to a wider audience.

Presented by Nokia, the mobile music leader, IAC is meant to be the hub for new music from fresh homegrown talents in Asia. IAC gives new acts the means to be discovered by an audience of millions through its exclusive IAC chart. For music lovers, it's a hunting ground for fresh sounds, a place to download free music and vote for the tracks you want to see at the top of the charts.

This week, Super together with Independent Artists Club, lent their discerning ears to one of IAC's fastest rising Indie bands, Battle City.

BATTALION PROFILE

Angelo Estrella on lead vocals, Jason Barleta on guitar and Aldrich Barleta on bass. "We don't have a drummer yet so when we have a live gig, we get a sessionist."

CURRENT STATUS

"We just finished recording a self-produced six-song EP entitled "Dots & Dashes" and are looking for distribution companies to officially release it."

THE JOY OF INDEPENDENCE

"You get to do whatever you want to do with your music. It's more fun when you have the freedom to experiment with tunes and not be pressured to create a "hit" song!"

SOUND CONTROL

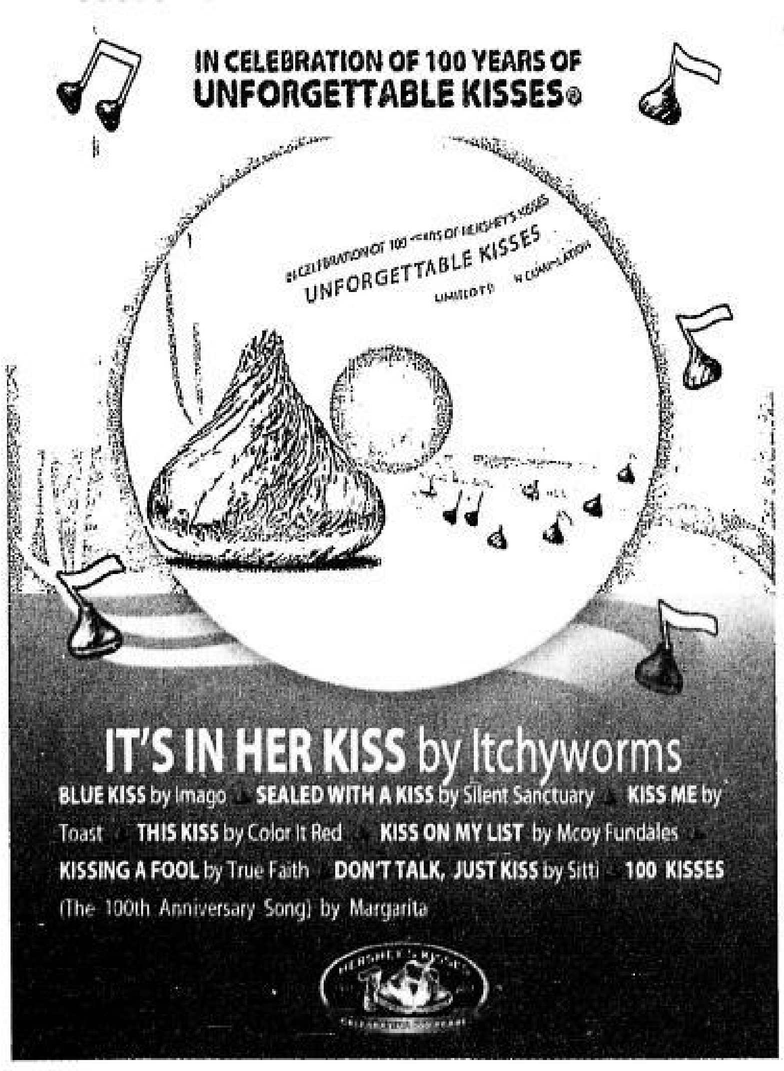
Their music is described as "a mishmash of diverse styles drawing from punk, new wave, jazz, folk, etc." And while the band doesn't necessarily stick to one particular genre, the sound resides closely to rock music. "Our songs show different sides to the band's personality. If you're listening to our music for the first time, 'Metronome Heart' would be a good starting point. It's a little bit more upbeat and accessible compared to our other stuff. And it being a love song doesn't hurt either."

Like Battle City, join the revolt! Sign up at the Independent Artists Club. To upload your songs, go to www.nokia-asia.com/iac/submissions.

If you're just out to check the freshest tunes, you can even get the chance to bag a five-day trip for two to Sydney Australia for the Good Vibrations Festival on Feb. 16, 2008. Just register from Dec. 6, 2007 to Jan. 17, 2008 and vote for your favorite track. Also up for grabs are two Nokia 5310 XpressMusic phones and two Nokia 5610 XpressMusic phones.

Get on board and visit the IAC website now at www.nokia.com.ph/iac.

WIN THIS CD
Just text KISSES to 2600 for more details.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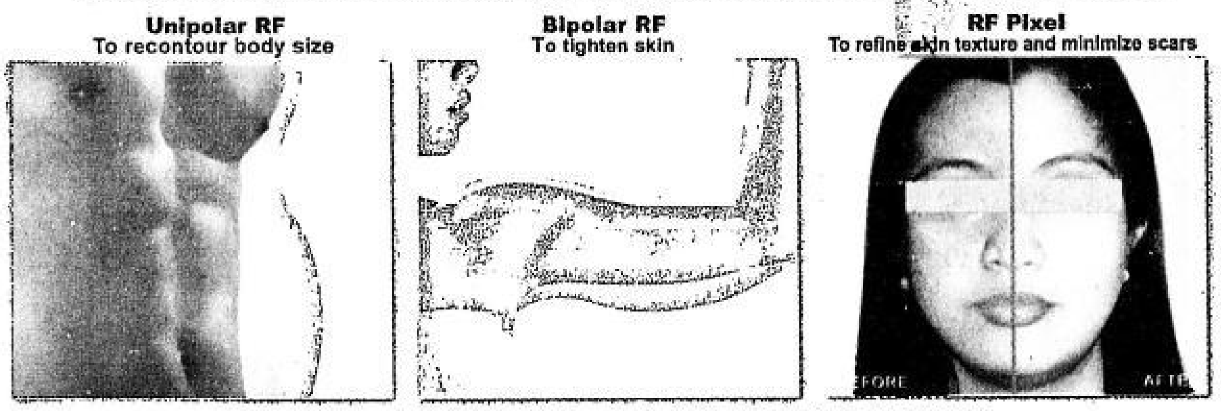
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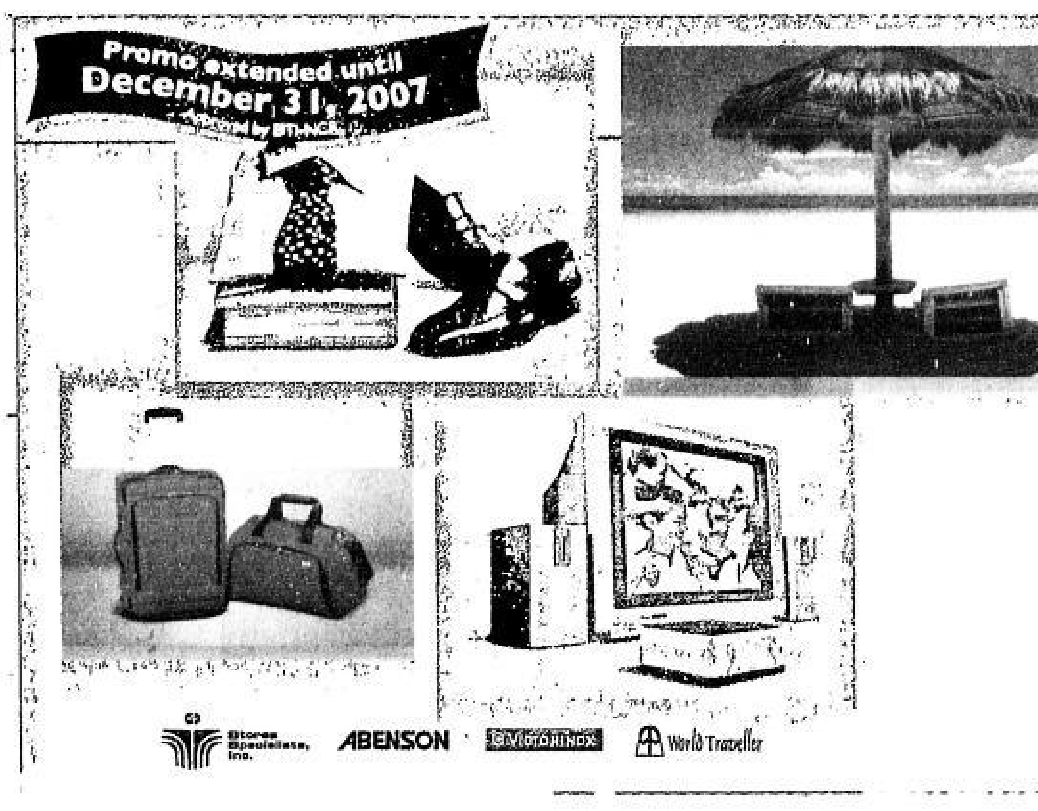
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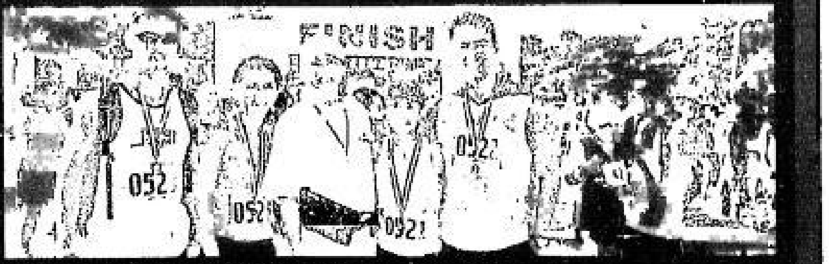
Per DTI-NCA Permit No. 0373 Series of 2007

THE FOUR of us all wearing our relay sash (hard to fit all our heads in)

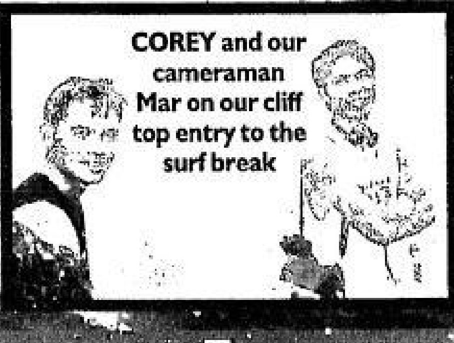


WE MAY not have won but at least we finished...

SURFING in Guam

We give a celeb a camera and you get to watch the stars come out to play

SURF'S UP! Waiting for the military police to leave so we can surf



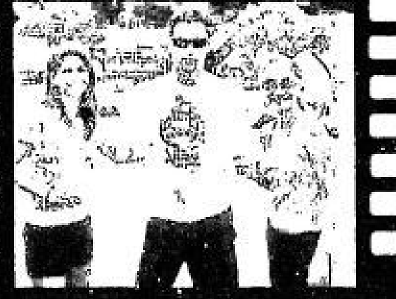
COREY and our cameraman Mar on our cliff top entry to the surf break

SLIDE SHOW

Marc Nelson's Photo Coup

WHERE'S th
Paddling in
Gu

AFTER dinner and dessert in Guam with Dyan, Jackie, Corey and the crew



By Katrina A. Holigores

CATCHING UP WITH Marc Nelson is no easy feat.

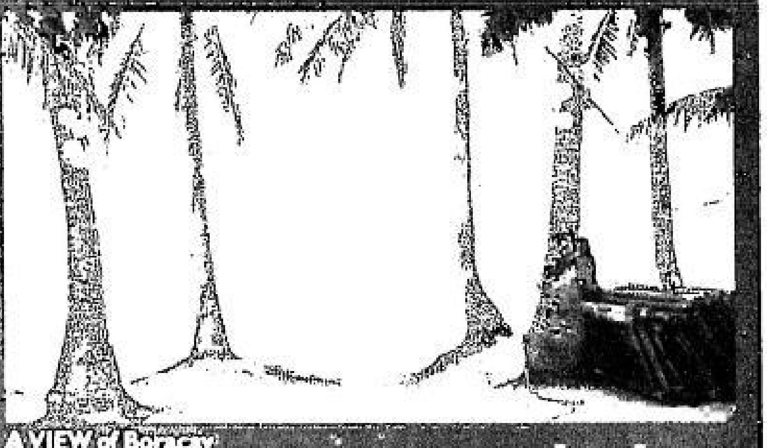
The current star of Sports Unlimited and Amazing Race Asia Season 2 doesn't seem to run out of energy. But even with the busiest of schedules, jetting in and out of Manila, he remains professional and friendly—even sending out a text during the controversial "coup" attempt at the Manila Peninsula, warning people not to pass by traffic-jammed Ayala Avenue.

When asked what other activities he's involved in, he mentions that he supports The Kythe Foundation for kids with cancer, World Vision and Every Day is your Birthday Foundation.

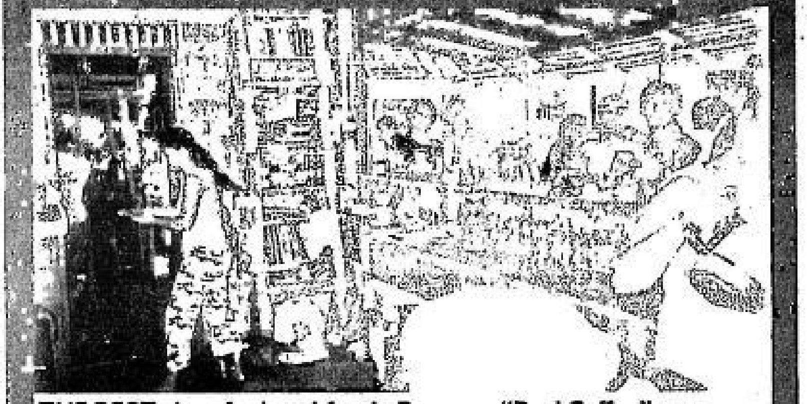
As for personal goals, he says, "My goal is to get people active and healthy, and make Pinoys realize what a fantastic and beautiful country they live in."

The best way to catch up with Marc Nelson is to give him a camera—to see what he does, and hope that there is enough film in it to keep up.

See Marc Nelson on Sports Unlimited every Saturday night 11:45 p.m. on ABS-CBN and on Amazing Race Asia every Thursday night at 9 p.m. on AXN.



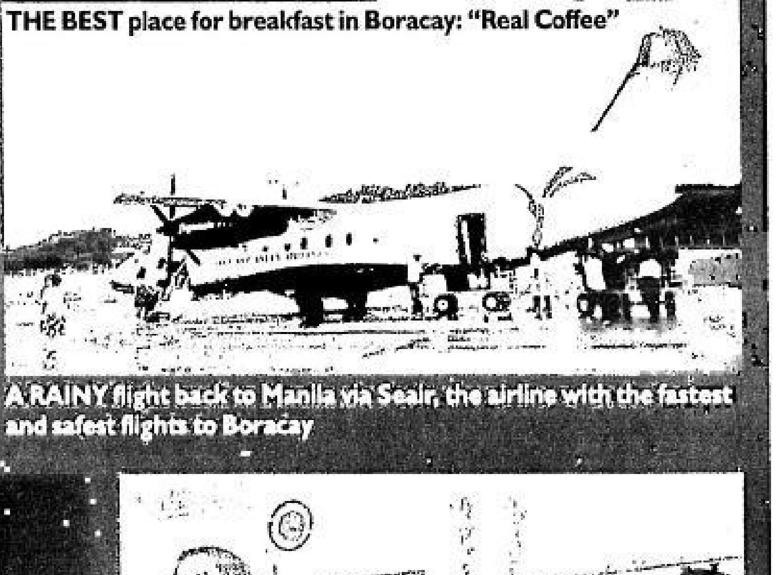
A VIEW of Boracay



THE BEST place for breakfast in Boracay: "Real Coffee"

SHARING some "buko" with the locals

TEARING a coconut apart by hand. The local Guam guys show us how it's done.



A RAINY flight back to Manila via Seair, the airline with the fastest and safest flights to Boracay

ME WITH the endangered koko bird

THE ENDANGERED koko bird of Guam. The reason we were running the marathon

PHOTOS AND CAPTIONS BY MARC NELSON

FISH GO DEEP, TRACY K AND DJ FUDGE HANG OUT IN THE CHILL ZONE

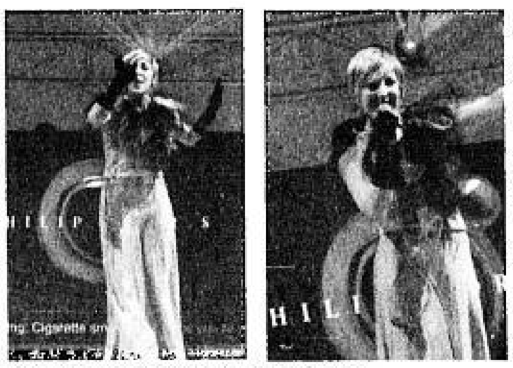
The Manila club scene exploded with the convergence of three international musical acts on one spectacular night: **PHILIP MORRIS MENTHOL KING SIZE** featured Fish Go Deep's Shane Johnson, Tracy K, and 'French Touch' veteran DJ Fudge at the latest installment of its uberstylish party series **Chill Zone**. Held at the expansive A. Venue Events Hall, the hip and happening partied down with an all-night open bar in an incredible atmosphere laced with the coolest tunes.

DJ Fudge kept the night going with his distinct bass-driven deep disco house beats.

All three artists found their musical careers early: Tracy K, or Tracy Kelliher says she's been singing "as long as she can remember" and recalls writing her first song with a friend when she was just five years old. Barcelona-based Parisian DJ Fudge has organized parties in Paris since he was 16, which is how he discovered his love for mixing disco with funk. Shane Johnson, on the other hand, grew up in a house ''full of music'' as his father was an avid jazz fan.

"I can't think of any other thing I'd rather be doing than this," says Shane. "How I felt about it [growing up] is still how I feel about it now." Evident in his 20 year collaboration with Greg Dowling, Shane's passion for music has resulted in worldwide hits such as "Lil' Hand", "Nights Like These" and UK Chart burner "The Cure and The Cause."

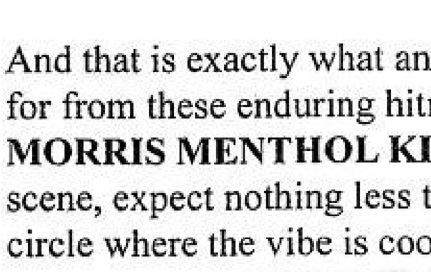
Fish Go Deep's Shane Johnson commanded the turntables in the PHILIP MORRIS MENTHOL KING SIZE Chill Zone.



Everyone's hands were raised when Tracy K's voice started reverberating in the venue.

A longtime Fish Go Deep collaborator, Tracy K performs full-tilt onstage but proves she's hardly a diva when it comes to the creative process. "Everything comes from the heart," she says, "I don't write about anything I don't know—and I think that's what people respond to." A keen writer of poetry and prose, she takes inspiration from her own personal experiences.

Fudge, on the other hand, finds inspiration through his many travels as a sought-after DJ. "Different places, memorable gigs— all of that goes into the music," he says. "I take my inspiration from anything. For example, a gig in Brazil exposed me to the rhythmic percussion style of steel drum bands. I think, maybe I can do something with this, you know?"



PHILIP MORRIS MENTHOL KING SIZE brings Tracy K, DJ Fudge, and Fish Go Deep's Shane Johnson to the icy cool Chill Zone partyscene in Manila.

Shane maintains the importance of having artistic control of the music. "Producing gives us the opportunity to test our material immediately," says Shane. "We can take them straight from the studio to the club to see what works and what doesn't." DJ Fudge agrees. "It is very important for an artist to be in complete control of what he makes," says Fudge. "Music can never be boring if you continue to improve. I will never stop making music."

And that is exactly what an eager global audience can hope for from these enduring hitmakers. So the next time **PHILIP MORRIS MENTHOL KING SIZE** lays the **Chill Zone** scene, expect nothing less than to party with the best in this circle where the vibe is cooler than ever.

Philip Morris Assistant Brand Manager Cax Mayuga, PMPMI Marketing Director Roy Manalili, Low-Priced Brands Assistant Brand Manager Cindy Toh, Philip Morris and Low-Priced Brands Brand Manager Guthrie Collado, Tracy K, Fish Go Deep's Shane Johnson and DJ Fudge

Philip Morris King Size

chill zone

Chill Zone Party Makati

Chill Zone Party Boracay

OWNING THE ZONE: PHILIP MORRIS MENTHOL KING SIZE CHILL ZONE PARTY SERIES

It blew everyone away early this year and hasn't stopped topping itself since: with its string of memorable affairs, **PHILIP MORRIS MENTHOL KING SIZE Chill Zone** has elevated the local club scene to resonate with a globe-trotting vibe.

Scenesters were treated to a mixture of the freshest local and international DJ acts spinning heart-racing house, impeccable hosting and innovative staging. Every night spent in the **Chill Zone** is a wildly memorable one, as many a satisfied scenester and party animal will attest.

The vibe of cool begins

The island-hopping event series made its first appearance on the world-famous island of Boracay at iconic hangout Hey Jude! The scene it laid out is well-remembered as fantastical: signature cocktails served by an all-night open bar; non-stop dancing; the eclectic house mixes of Kevin Ruiz, Daley Padley, and D-Formation; exotic fire dancers backlit by blue lights scattered randomly on Boracay's fine white sand.

In the zone of blues

A hard act to follow, but follow it they did. Holding zone down at Cebu, Formo Bar was transformed into a slick futuristic lounge by **Chill Zone's** signature blue lighting. Southern belles and gentlemen toasted and tinkled glasses all night as DJs Wendell Garcia, Elian Habayeb and legendary deep disco house maestro DJ Ian Pooley took turns at the tables. With individual cutting edge sets, they rocked everyone to the core, keeping the floor packed with scenesters getting down.

Subzero down south

Cagayan de Oro was the next pitstop that got the **PHILIP MORRIS MENTHOL KING SIZE Chill Zone** treatment, with DJs Wendell Garcia, Kevin Ruiz and Elian Habayeb reprising their roles as chilled out mixmasters of funky house. Club 1150's interpretation of the **Chill Zone** vibe was atmospheric, as the scene was laid around specially-designed light tables glowing the **Chill Zone** blue. The style-seeking set were treated to an open bar of straight-up classic cocktails, as well as a special blue cocktail mix in an ice shotglass that was simply super cool.

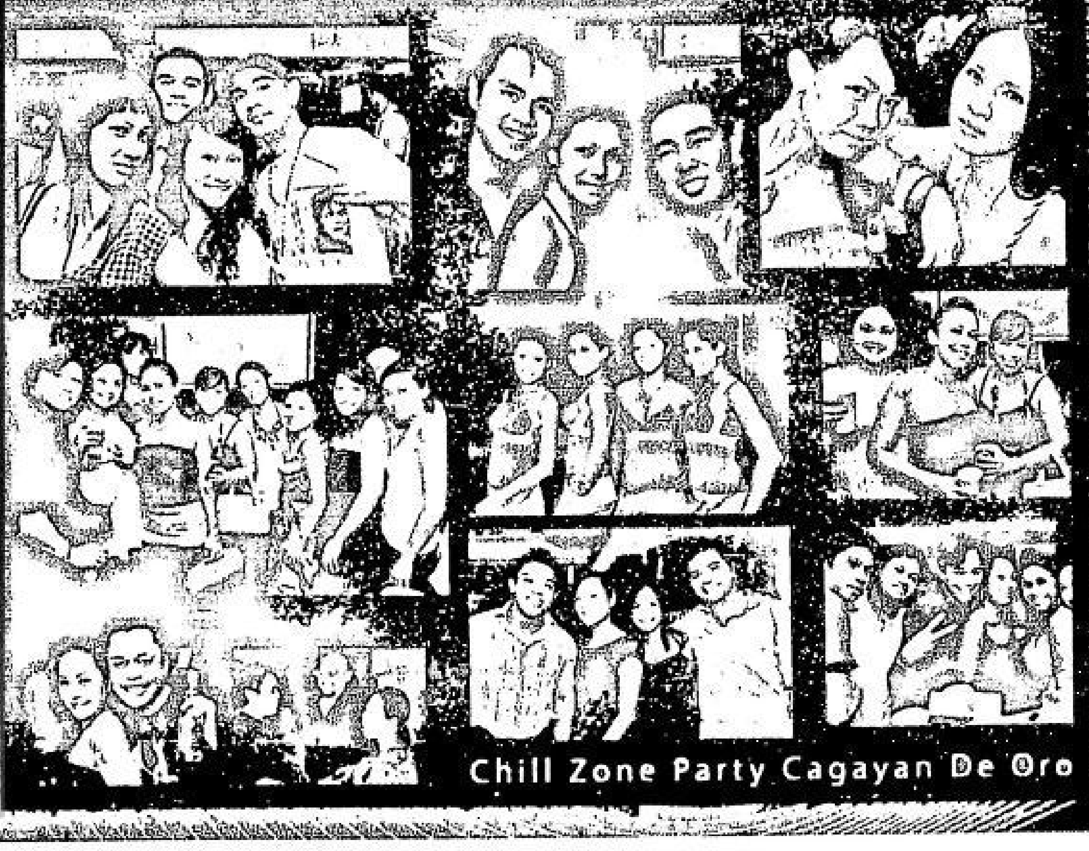
No stopping the Chill Zone

The latest installment in this party circuit took over Manila at A. Venue Events Hall, drawing eager clubbers with the biggest names on the international DJ scene yet. The venue was transformed into a cool blue and white techno-lounge outfitted with flat screens floating high above the crowd. The open bar du jour featured free-flowing cocktails suited to a chic city atmosphere.

DJ Elian Habayeb opened the evening with a steady beat that quickly drew a crowd to the floor. Shane Johnson from celebrated DJ-duo Fish Go Deep, accompanied by Dublin-based songstress Tracey K, followed the set with an uplifting, energetic beat that kept everyone on their toes in a ready excitement. Barcelona-based DJ Fudge took over with an intense, rhythmic set that brought the night filled with fun and fantasy to a close.

With breakbeats and melodies still dancing in our heads, one can only wonder where **Chill Zone** will next lay its scene. Redefining Manila's nightlife, **PHILIP MORRIS MENTHOL KING SIZE** definitely owns the zone on these unforgettable nights that are cooler-than-cool.

Chill Zone Party Cebu



Chill Zone Party Cagayan De Oro

Government Warning: Cigarette smoking is dangerous to your health

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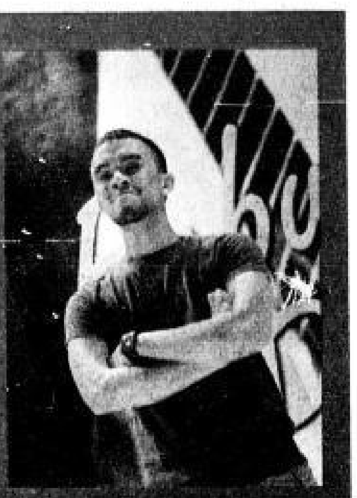


MARKSMAN: Mark Nicdao

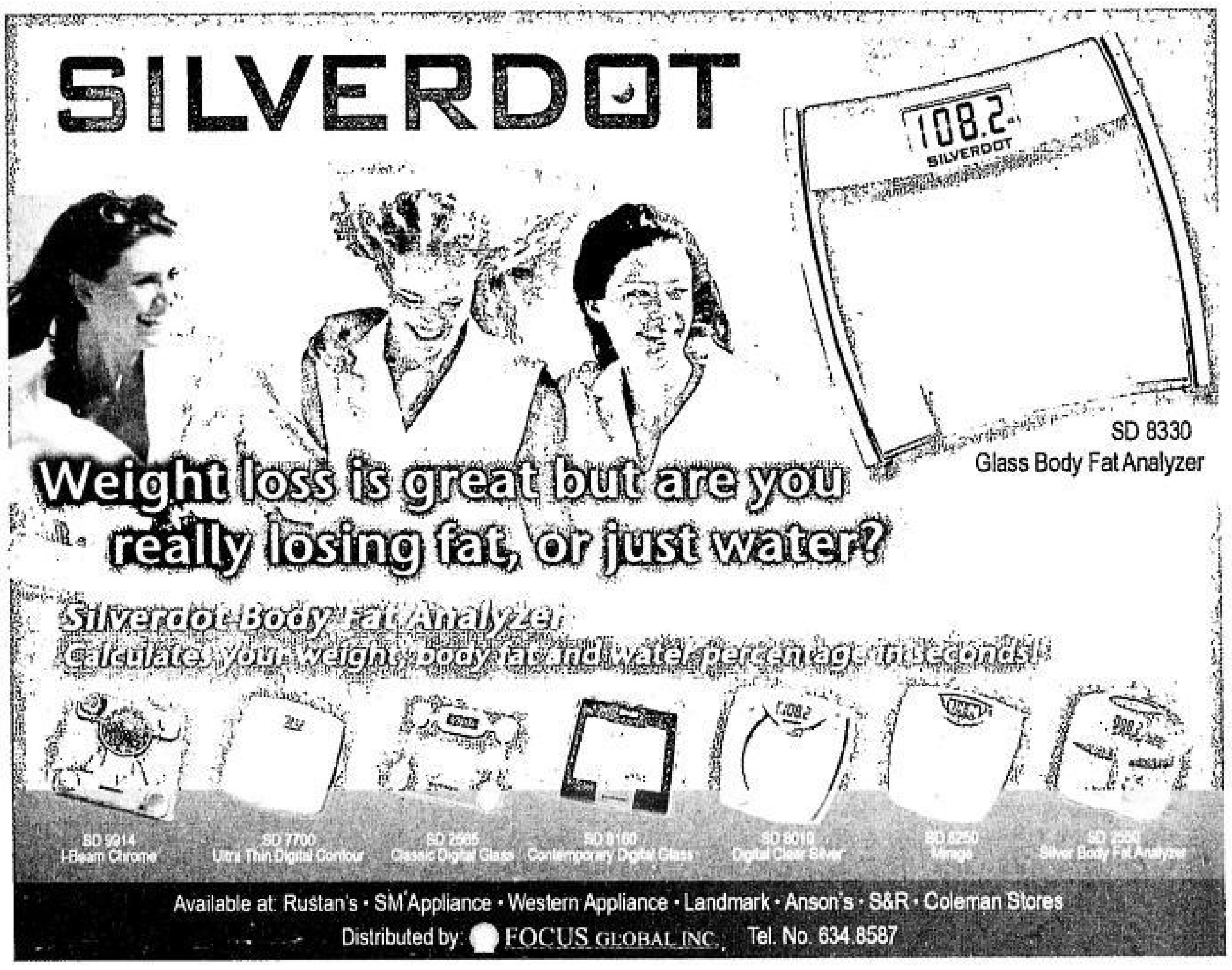
KC for you

Ulterior motive: Bayo's Fabulous Pinay launch

Crime scene: Shangri-La Plaza

Date of release: November 8

MEGA-LING *SILA*. Sharon Cuneta with Tin-tin Bersola



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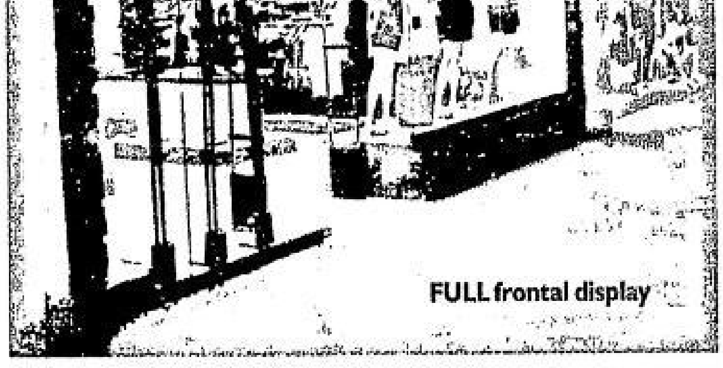
TALL AND TAN AND young and—you know the drill. Brazil's influence on style and lifestyle has crossed continents and oceans, and into our very shores. So we're clinking our caipirinha glasses to celebrate the opening of Zona Sul, a fun and deliciously sexy new boutique that showcases exclusive stylish collections from established and emerging Brazilian brands. *Nossa!* Here's your first class ticket to the tropical lifestyles of Rio to the urban sensuality of Sao Paulo.

This visually arresting store carries clothes that were handpicked for their distinct designs, originality and character. So don't hit the beach without checking out their colorful printed *vestidos* to cutting edge denims, exquisite lounge wear, and sensual swim wear. The brands offered are as sexy as they sound—Ellus, Cantao, Redley, Totem, Shop 126, Lenny, Agua de Coco and Zoomp. Soon enough, you'll be chillin' like a Brazilian.

Zona Sul is located at the 2/F Power Plant Mall in Rockwell. For inquiries, email info@zonasulboutique.com, or call 729-8847.

PUTS the 'bra' in Brazil



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Rocking Democracy
at the NU Rock Awards

Text and photos by Maui V. Reyes

BABES, BOOZE, AND A WHOLE LOT OF ROCK n' roll … how else will NU celebrate their 20th year in honoring the best musicians in the biz? Now more tame than the past few years' celebrations—more bouncers, less rowdy troublemakers—the night went on smoother than host Asia Agcaoili's flawless legs.

Other than the big wins of the night (record companies were huddled in corners keeping score), the next biggest topic of convo was the Manila Peninsula mini-coup that, as we learned, musicians found funny, stupid, and "incredibly hot."

Who said rock n' rollers weren't up to current events?

"From what I saw, they could have done a better job at getting their message across. [illegible] pag-violate ng rights ng media? If his cause is anti-corruption, I'm not for subjecting people to danger just like that."
—Jorel Corpus, Kjwan

[illegible]

"If you're going to do something, make sure you have a goal—and that what you're going to do is going to happen. Don't do it just to get attention."—Armi Millare, Up Dharma Down

"It's [illegible] though [illegible] hearts were broken."—Ebe Dancel, Sugar Free

"I thought it was funny—until people started getting hit by tear gas. Then it wasn't funny. But the tank going in the hotel? That was funny."
—Marc Abaya, Kjwan

"I think he lost his nerve. It would have been better if he went all the way. The problem is people don't get that to have a revolution happen, there has to be bloodshed. That's the consequence of a revolution—bloodshed. Mao Zedong said so himself—a revolution is not a picnic. We've had bloodless revolutions the past few decades and look, nothing's happened."
—Lourd de Veyra, Radioactive Sago Project

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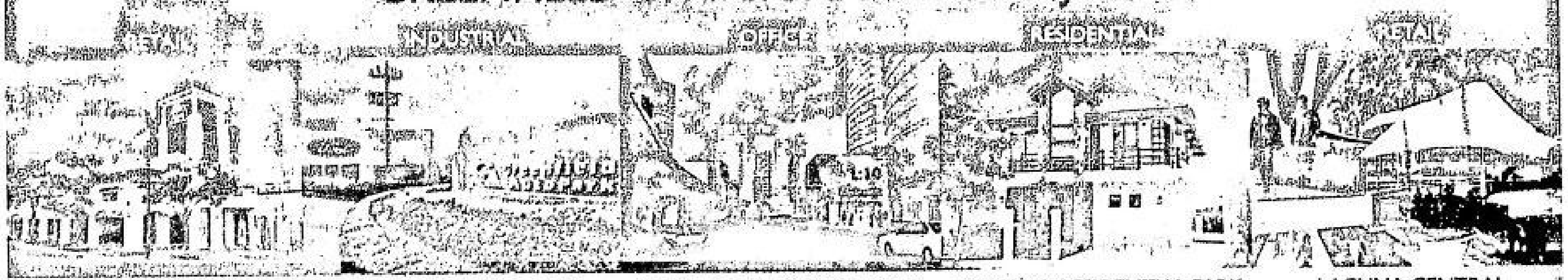

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A weekly directory of the country's best establishments

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Bellevue Hotels and Resorts on its way

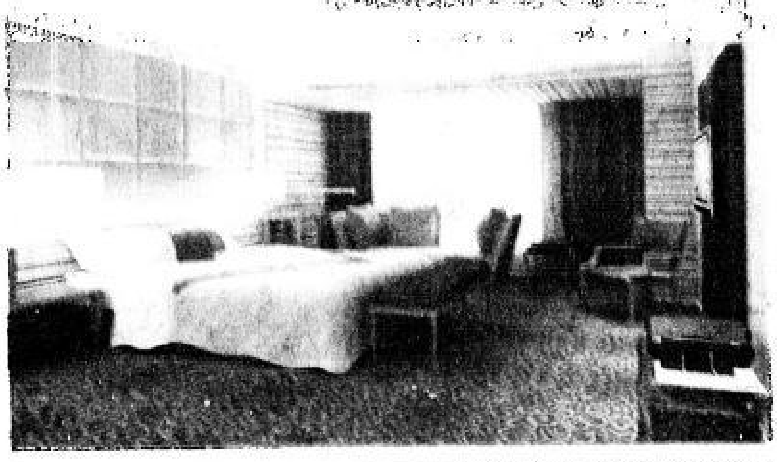
WITH THE VERY LARGE VOLume of corporate accounts and long staying guests from Laguna, Cavite, Batangas, Alabang, Muntinlupa and Parañaque, the demand for rooms are exceptionally high, prompting The Bellevue to create a new wing to cope with the booming market. The Bellevue Executive Tower is expected to fill in this void with its 250 rooms, capping the hotel's room count to 470. Expected to open by the first quarter of 2009, the Executive Tower builds on the strengths and beauty of its predecessor and adds a bit more.

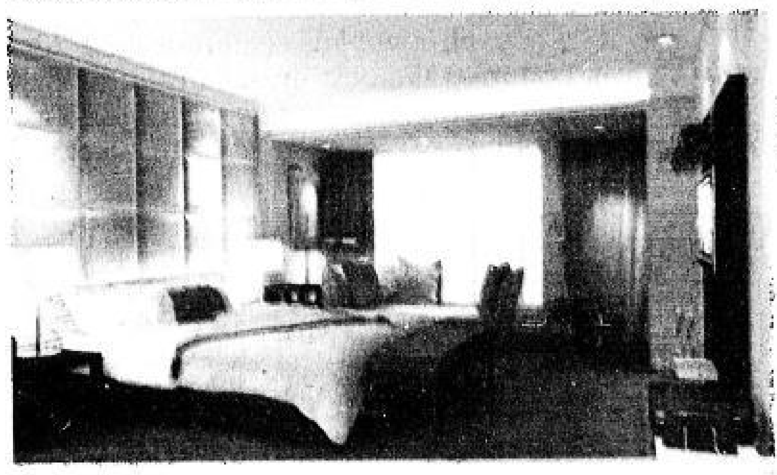
Adding to The Bellevue's family of hotels is a smaller one with 150 rooms to be built at the heart of the business district of Alabang at Madrigal Business Park. Targeted for cost-conscious businessmen and travelers, the smaller hotel will still have the quality, standards and class of the original property but with more selective services and amenities, without sacrificing the trademark Bellevue quality and space every guest needs.

With the prevalence of the tourism and retirement market, The Bellevue is also set to build their very own high end residence named The Bellevue Residences. To rise beside the Executive Tower, The Residences will feature one, two and three bedroom units and is geared to be a high-end premium residence, complete with its own spa, gym and swimming pool. Only 150-200 units will be built to ensure spacious units for each resident in the 26 storey tower.

After dominating the Southern market, The Bellevue sets its sights on the island paradise of Bohol. With the groundbreaking of the resort tentatively set on the first quarter of 2008, the master plan for the luxury resort is to have 200 rooms, including beachfront villas. Located 15 minutes away from the airport, Bellevue Bohol is gearing up to be the luxury haven at Panglao's virgin beach paradise.

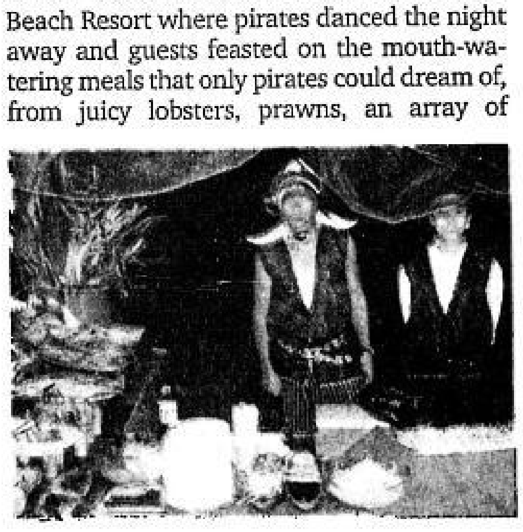
The Bellevue Hotel is located at North Bridgeway, Filinvest Corporate City, Alabang, Muntinlupa City. For inquiries, call 771-8181.





Pirates' Night at Pearl Farm Beach Resort

FRIDAY NIGHTS AT PEARL FARM BEACH Resort, managed by Fuego Hotels, will never be the same again. Nov. 23, paints a history of one successful theme night called "Pirates' Night", to kick off the resort's Friday Night in-house event. Ahoy to all, as guests stepped into the Maranao beachfront of Pearl Farm Beach Resort where pirates danced the night away and guests feasted on the mouth-watering meals that only pirates could dream of, from juicy lobsters, prawns, an array of seafoods and tropical fruits. Grilled and freshly cooked specialties comprised the main course of chef Edgar Chavez's Pacific menu.



Matching the party's theme about pirates, the Pearl Farm staff were dressed in pirate-inspired outfits making the theme night more meaningful. Guests enjoyed the program. with the entertainment presented by The Isla Dance Troup, dancing to Caribbean music. Henna tattoo, games and a raffle made the theme night more exciting as guests actively participated. Pearl Farm souvenirs, including the collector's item stuffed toy "Charlie", Pearl Farm's signature mascot, and the major prize of an Intro Dive Course at Pearl Farm Aqua Sports Center (Wind and Wave Davao) gave lucky guests an added treat.

With the success of the first Pirates' Night, guests can look forward to more exciting and memorable Friday nights at Pearl Farm Beach Resort. For more information call 750-1999, e-mail guests@fuegohotels.com or log on to www.fuegohotels.com.

Discovery Suites unveils X'mas Three Package

DISCOVERY SUITES ONCE AGAIN OFfers its popular Christmas Three Package from Dec. 8-30, and Jan. 1-12, 2008. Favored by local residents, the Christmas Three Package allows guests to spend a glorious three-night stay at Discovery Suites for only P8,888++ for a Junior Suite, or P9,999++ for a One-Bedroom Suite. This package is just in time for the Christmas rush as the hotel's central location makes it the perfect haven for holiday shoppers because of its proximity to major shopping centers like the Podium, Shangri-La Plaza and Mega Mall.

The Christmas Three Package is inclusive of complimentary breakfast for two persons at Serendipity Lounge, access to the swimming pool and Balance Lifestyle and Fitness Gym, complimentary WiFi internet at Restaurant 5 and the Serendipity Lounge, complimentary parking and free newspapers for the duration of their stay.

Guests who avail of the Christmas Three Package will be contributing to the conservation and community-building efforts of the World Wildlife-Fund and Gawad Kalinga. A P50 contribution from the P8,888++ and P9,999++ suite rates will be donated in their name to these institutions. For inquiries and reservations, please call Discovery Suites at (632)683-8369/(632)683-8396 or (632)683-8222.

Letter To Santa

The Malayan Plaza's dolphins in December treat

THIS DECEMBER, enjoy a great and refreshing treat for the whole family at the Malayan Plaza. For every overnight booking in a one-bedroom deluxe unit at P4,800++ per night, get 2 regular seat tickets to the Wonderful World of Dolphins at Metrowalk. Experience the fun watching one of nature's most intelligent creatures as they display smart skills and witty antics. This Christmas package also includes daily buffet breakfast at the Q Bistro, bottled water, local newspaper, and free use of the swimming pool. Late checkout is up to 4 p.m. and subject to room availability. Rooms not guaranteed shall be released after 6 p.m. on the day of expected arrival.

This special rate is subject to 10 percent service charge and prevailing government taxes and valid from Dec. 6, to Jan. 6, 2008 for local residents and foreigners with ACR.

Located at the heart of the Ortigas Commercial District, The Malayan Plaza offers furnished units that easily combine aesthetic values, comfort and functionality. Apart from featuring stylish interiors, the Malayan Plaza serviced residences are also equipped with complete living, dining and kitchen facilities, NDD/IDD telephones, individually controlled air-conditioning, hot and cold water, Internet access in the rooms, children's playground, housekeeping/laundry concierge services, room service, and a 24-hour security service. For further inquiries and reservations, contact The Malayan Plaza at 706-0055, or e-mail sales@quantumsuites.com or log on to the website at http://www.themalayanplazahotel.com.

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MEY LIN POT & NOODLE HOUSE IN ADRIATICO IS THE ONLY BRANCH THAT serves Chinese specialty dishes and your favorite KTV tunes in one great place to dine and unwind at the same time. Enjoy the goodness of authentic Chinese cuisine served in your own KTV room while you belt out your favorite videoke tunes. Mey Lin Adriatico has 5 VIP Karaoke TV rooms in the 2nd floor, ideal for party celebrations like birthdays or any special occasion with an intimate gathering of family, office workers and friends. Each KTV room can accommodate 10-20 persons and is theme-inspired in various oriental motifs for that exotic ambience. Aesthetically and acoustically designed with high ceilings and cozy interiors, Mey Lin KTV rooms are fully equipped with state-or-the-art fully digital sound system that gives a crisp and an almost professional sound quality. With no room charge and no per person charge, it's hassle free. Great music, fun and authentic Chinese cuisine meld into one exciting place to be - Mey Lin Adriatico at 1717 Adriatico Street, Malate, Manila. Call 536-3699 and 450-0262 for reservation and inquiries. Other Mey Lin Pot & Noodle House branches are in SM Megamall Level 4 Bldg. A, SM Manila Basement Level, SM Mall of Asia North Parking Building beside Hypermart and at the G/F of Jupiter Place, Jupiter Street, Bel-Air, Makati City.

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Sushi-Ya
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Kalye Juan
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Tong Yang Shabu-Shabu & BBQ Restaurant
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Mandaluyong City
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FJ's Grill
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The Old Spaghetti House
687-6630

North Park
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MUSEUM CAFE
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Greenbelt 4
757-3000
757-6000

Finio Restaurant
415-1278

Kopiroti Davao
(082)3016009

Chelsea Market & Cafe
909-7011
909-7012

Rocking Democracy

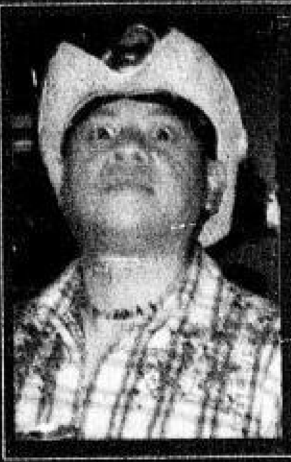
From page F1

"To each his own. *'Yung paniniwala niya, pareho din sa paniniwala ng iba.* We all want change ... he just showed it a different way. I guess if his goal was to make a statement, he was successful."—*Ria, Paramita*

"I'm not pro-administration or pro-opposition ... I'm pro-peace. *Kung sa'n ang tama, dun dapat tayo.* There are always two sides to every story, but whatever we choose to do ... let's not compromise our freedom. Idealism is good, but within reason."—*Japs Sergio, Rivermaya*

"I am embarrassed and disappointed. I voted for the guy and I thought he was going to adapt mainstream ways to create change. I wasted my vote and I want him to know that. *Sayang ang* idealism *mo, pare. Gulo lang pala gusto mo.*"—*Yan Yuzon, Pupil*

"I like his bravado. But really, you have to plan well."—*Toti Dalmacion, Terno Recordings*



"What is he? A senator? I don't know man, I got f*cking stranded in Hong Kong because of it. All these people ... they should just get punished. If you don't punish them, they'll do it again. If I were president, I'd chop his head off. On the guillotine, man. It's okay [if he reads this], I don't know him and he doesn't know me."—*Wolf Gemora*

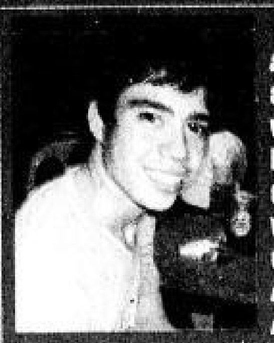
"I find it vague because he walked out [of court]. I understand that he doesn't trust the system, but if he played along, people would have been able to hear what he has to say. I'm not happy about the government either ... it's different faces but same principles, year after year. I'm looking for clarity on the whole thing."—*Francis Reyes, The Dawn*

"I think they should call it a day. You have to let the government grow. Cutting the [government's] legs off won't let it go beyond its initial stages of growth. Let the system work."—*Manuel Legarda*

"I think it's a big nuisance. *Sana pinanindigan niya sinabi niya, 'di ba?*"—*Mikey Amistoso, Cuidad*

"It was half-baked. They'll never get the support they need. I think they were just checking how many military ranks would support them. The guy gets 11 million votes, and he could have made a difference in the Upper House. Instead, he takes it to the streets. A little more patience ... he could wait three more years."—*Buddy Zabala, The Dawn*

"I think it's a joke. If you're going to do something like that, you gotta plan a bit better, don't you think? I mean, it's more than getting 28 guys and walking out of a courtroom, then going to a hotel. If you're going to coup, you gotta coup, man! Impress me! It was like a joke!"—*Tirse Ripol, Razorback*



"*Wala akong balita* about that ... I was at home listening to music the whole day."—*Jayson Fernandez, Rivermaya*

"*Kahapon, ang politiko ... ngayon, tugtugan lang!!!*"
—Kat, Sinosikat

"He's crazy. But for good reason. [The president] is f*cking sh*t."—*Miggy Chavez, Chicosci*

"I got stuck at home. I was going to go drinking *sana*, but noooooo."—*Kelvin Yu, Itchyworms*

"That was funny! I think he's hot though ... he's a bad boy who's got guts. It's good I guess. It keeps everyone on their toes. You always need a rebel to stir things up. It was really funny, just how everything went down. There were just so many things wrong with the picture."—*Dylan, The Peep Show host*

"Happy Boni-f*cking Day! It was unnecessary."—*Mong Alcaraz, Chicosci*

NU107 ROCKAWARDS 2007 WINNERS LIST

Best New Artist: Hilera
Vocalist of The Year: Kat Agarrado of Sinosikat?
Guitarist of The Year: Ira Cruz of Bamboo
Bassist of The Year: Nathan Azarcon of Bamboo
Drummer of The Year: Vic Mercado of Bamboo and Mark Escueta of Rivermaya
Best Live Act: Bamboo
In The Raw Award: Reklamo
Song of The Year: "Will You Ever Learn" by Typecast
Album of The Year: "Moonlane Gardens" by Orange & Lemons
Artist of The Year: Bamboo
Best Music Video: "Dvd-x" of Sandwich (Directed by Marie Jamora)
Best Album Packaging: Sarah Gaugler and Clementine for "Moonlane Gardens" of Orange & Lemons
Producer of The Year: Lourd and Francis De Veyra for "T****** Mo Ang Daming Nagugutom Sa Mundo Fashionista Ka Pa Rin" of Radioactive Sago Project
Listeners Choice Award: Bamboo
Hall of Fame: Mike and Angelo Villegas

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Rocking Democracy

From page F1

"To each his own. [illegible]"

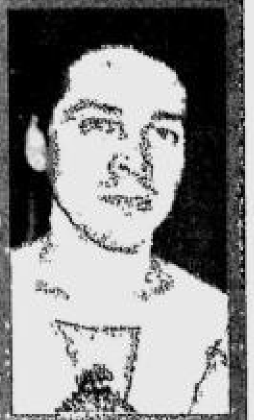
"I'm not pro-administration or pro-opposition … I'm pro-peace. *Kung sa'n ang tama, dun dapat tayo.* There are always two sides to every story, but whatever we choose to do … let's not compromise our freedom. Idealism is good, but within reason." —*Japs Sergio, Rivermaya*

"[illegible]"

"I like his bravado. But really, you have to plan well." —*Toti Dalmacion, Terno Recordings*

"What is he? A [illegible]? I don't know [illegible]"

"[illegible]"



"[illegible]"

"[illegible]"

"[illegible]"

"I think they should call it a day. You have to let the government grow. [illegible]"

"[illegible]"

"[illegible]"

"[illegible]"

"[illegible]"

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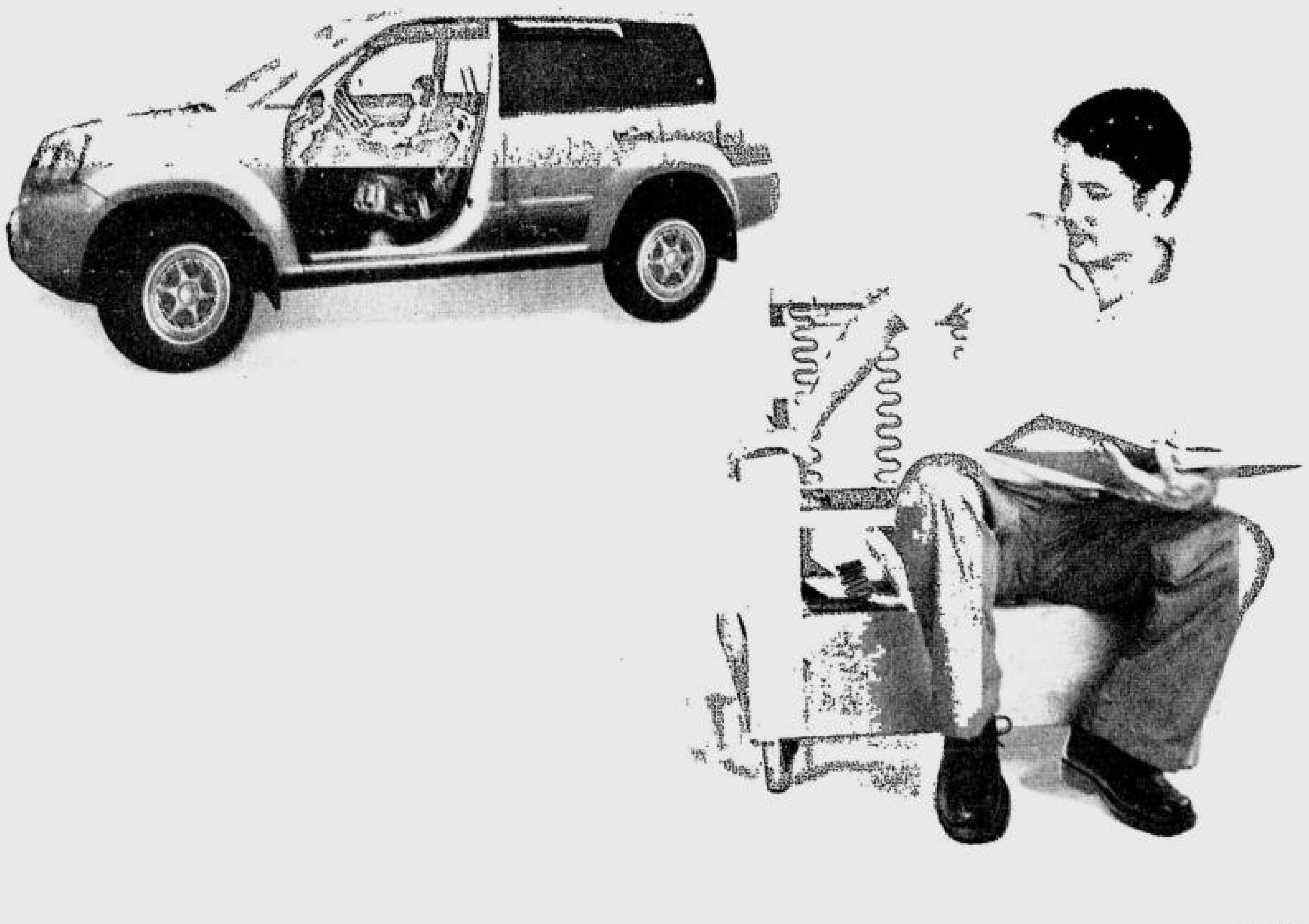

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Mobile revolution

By Niño Mark M. Sablan

THERE IS NO DOUBT THAT THE MObile imaging revolution is continuing to move forward. Leading mobile phone brand Nokia has been making sure that it is part of this change.

Its latest project, the Nokia Cinemaiksi, is a short film-making competition that makes use of the Nokia N series phones. The contest originated from a workshop conducted by Nokia Philippines to give users an opportunity to learn filmmaking using their handsets. Participated in by twelve teams of two from various advertising agencies, the workshop was filled with lectures and an actual filmmaking activity where all participants had to produce a 60-seconder material using the Nokia N95. The top five teams that scored the highest received a Nokia N95 to be used to compete in Subic for the Cinemaiksi 2007: The 1st Philippine Advertising Congress Short Film Festival, part of the activities of the 20th Philippine Advertising Congress.

Last Nov. 21, all five teams went to Subic for the Ad Congress and more importantly, to compete in the Cinemaiksi. The teams had only two days to film their entries using the Nokia N95 and with the theme "The Power to Change" in mind. After going around Subic to create their masterpiece, all entries were submitted last Nov. 23 and then shown to the public and the judges the next day.

The entries are "Imagine" by JP Cuison and Mela Advincula of Leo Burnett, which shows a series of ordinary scenarios but with superimposed drawings that showcase change; "Handa N U" by Katrina Encanto and Nicole Tolentino of Ace Saatchi & Saatchi, which features a guy living his life to the fullest after he receives a text message from God saying time is up; "Naks" by Kara Bautista and Joey Claronino of JWT, which features several masked everyday heroes doing good deeds such as helping the maid carry luggage; "Mongol" by Argem Vinuya and Maki Maquiling of DDB Philippines, which shows the good things a guy would do if he had a magical pencil that can make things come true; and "Touch to Right" by Ana Menguito & Meck Besinga of DDB, which artistically demonstrates how one person can literally touch others and make a change.

Nov. 24, 2007
Cinemaiksi Grand Prize Winner
FIFTY THOUSAND PESOS
50,000.00
NOKIA
Nseries

SHORT FILM, LONG CHECK. JP Cuison and Mela Advincula of Leo Burnett are awarded their giant check by Sandeep Khanna and Willie Cher for being the grand prize winners of the first-ever Nokia Cinemaiksi

FIFTEEN MILLISECONDS OF FAME. Your Tube winner Kris Camacho (second from left) together with Sandeep Khanna, head of marketing, Nokia Philippines Inc., Homer Medici and Victor Villanueva (actors in the video), and Willie Cher, multimedia business unit head, Nokia Philippines Inc.

Originality and creativity, content and interpretation of the theme, use of technology and overall impact were the criteria for judging. After being viewed by judges Jim Libiran, writer/director of multi-awarded film "Tribu" and ABC5 Head of Public Affairs Production; Fritz Kohle, Singapore-based award-winning producer and former head of post production at Bigfoot Entertainment; and Arlene Cuevas, award-winning producer of independent films, including "Batanes," the winner was determined.

Winning the first-ever Nokia Cinemaiksi is the entry entitled "Imagine" by the team from Leo Burnett. According to the judges, the winning short film garnered the highest score because it is "a melancholic depiction of creative power, with images full of foreboding." Team member JP on the other hand thinks that their non-linear story and stop motion animation both helped them emerge victorious.

Apart from the P50,000 cash prize and trophy that were awarded to the pair during the Araw Awards last Nov. 24, JP and Mela also won a trip to the 2008 Hong Kong Independent Short Film and Video Awards.

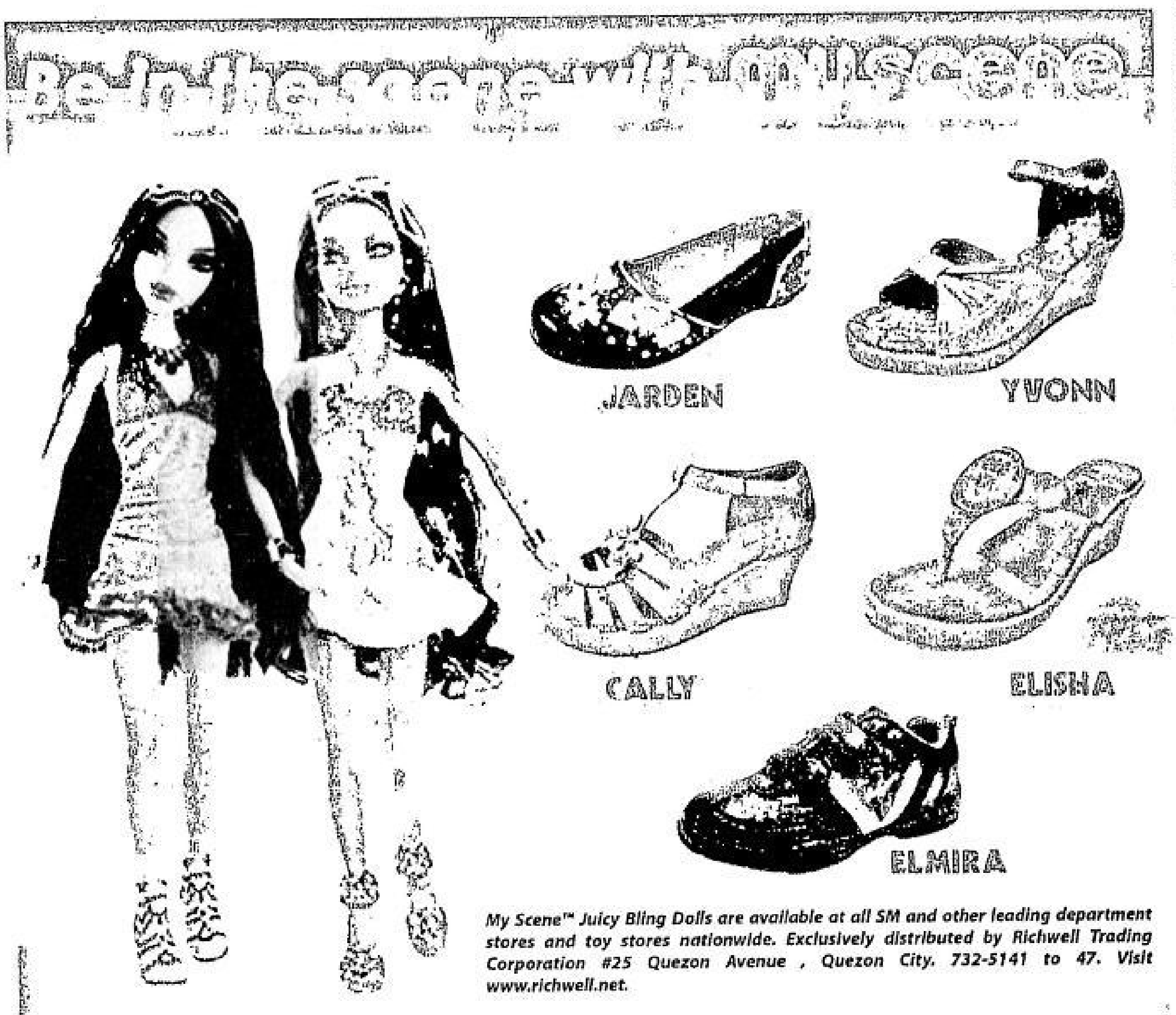
All entries are also being shown to the public until Dec. 15, after which a people's choice award will be determined. A cash prize of P30,000 awaits the lucky team.

Your tube, your phone

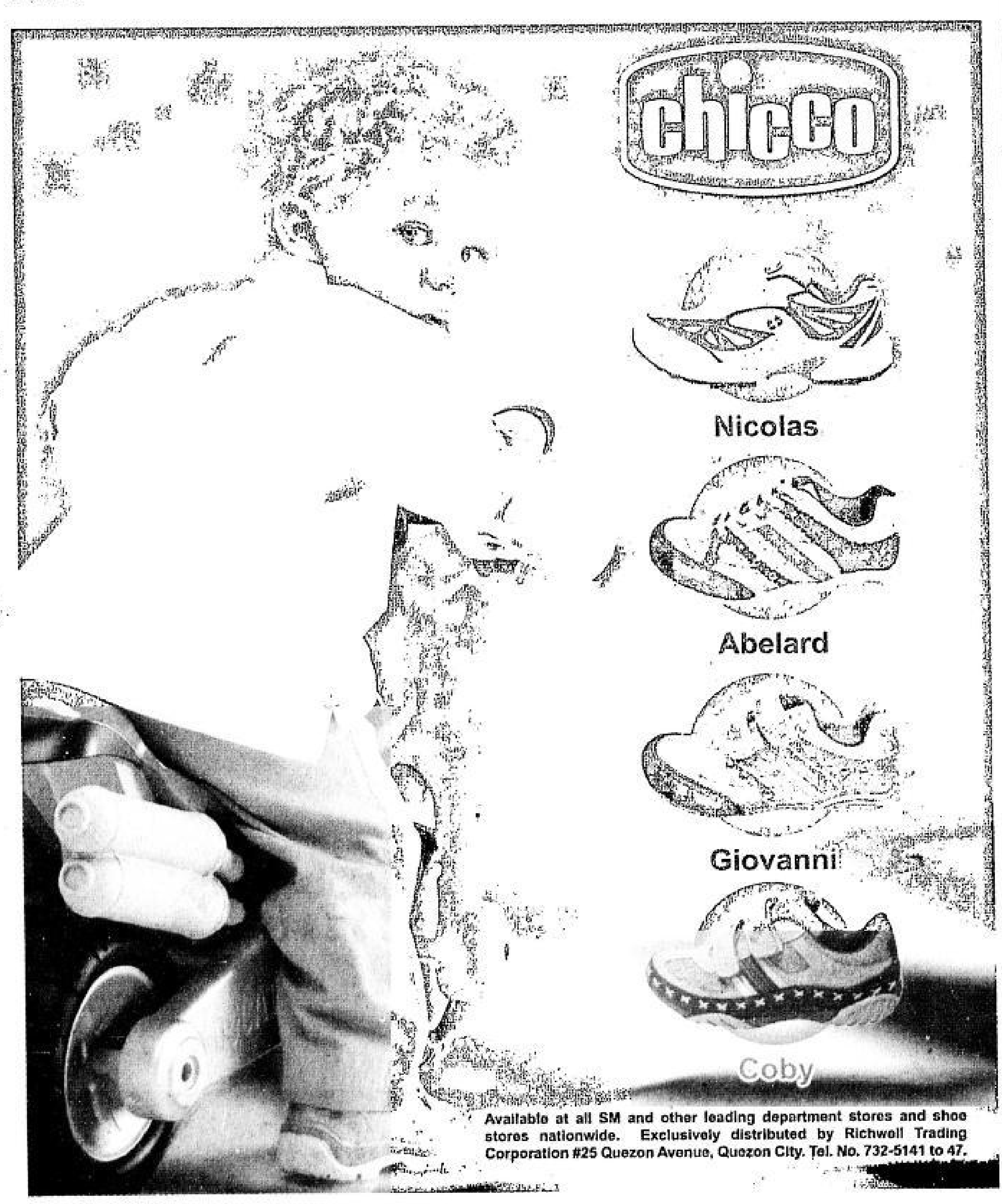
Apart from the Cinemaiksi, Nokia also held another contest called Your Tube, which was open to all delegates and guests at the Ad Congress. Over at the Ad Congress convention hall, the vibrant Nokia space had a recording booth where contestants could record their entries. Kris Andrea Camacho, a 2nd year Fine Arts student of the University of San Carlos in Cebu, wowed the judges with her entry entitled "Levitate," a story of two sets of show-off feet. She walked away with a cool Nokia N70 Music Edition and MD-4 speakers.

With the undeniable success of Cinemaiksi, Nokia had just proven how significant multimedia experiences can be in life development.

"Our vision for Nokia N series is to enrich people's lives with connected, mobile, multimedia experiences," says Sandeep Khanna, Head of Marketing, Nokia Philippines Inc. "Mobile filmmaking is one of the key pillars, for that and we are delighted to see that taken to such outstanding heights in this Ad Congress. We will continue to support this endeavor in the future and more importantly use this to also showcase the incredible creative talent here in Philippines. For us, the camera has just begun to roll!"



My Scene™ Juicy Bling Dolls are available at all SM and other leading department stores and toy stores nationwide. Exclusively distributed by Richwell Trading Corporation #25 Quezon Avenue , Quezon City. 732-5141 to 47. Visit www.richwell.net.



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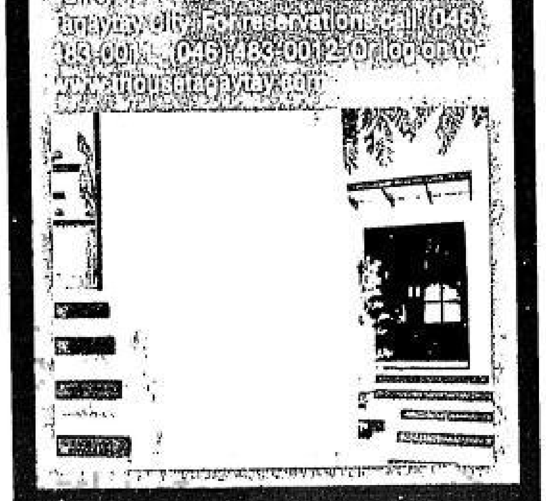
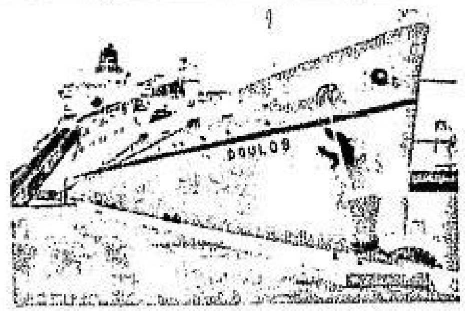
24/7 SUPER RADAR

By Janine Cuenca-Dario and Stef Juan

HEAR firsthand the musical genius of Manila's top DJs as they mix house music with live performances with a few of the great vocalists of the local scene at **Ultramashit! from Chivas Live DJ Lab Experiments**. The vocal talents of Skarlet, Girl Valencia, Jun Lopito and Kevin Roy will come together tonight at the Embassy Super Club. Doors open at 10 p.m. Call 816-4195.

TASTE [illegible] weekend escape from the city [illegible] [illegible] Zen-like surroundings [illegible] and a quiet restaurant that serves light but filling nourishments. For [illegible] drive to 3195 Calamba Road, Tagaytay City. For reservations call (046) 483-0011, (046) 483-0012 or log on to [illegible]tagaytay.com



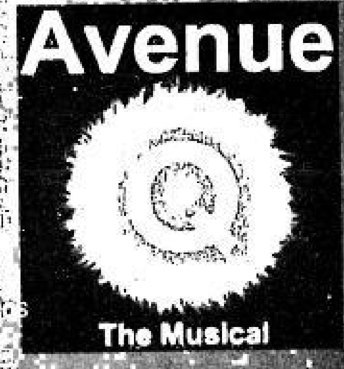


SMELL the sweet scent of the books wafting in the Manila Bay breeze at the **Floating Book Fair** held aboard the world's oldest active ocean-going ship, the MV Doulos, until Dec. 23. From Manila, MV Doulos will sail up to Subic Freeport where she will dock from Dec. 28 to Jan. 14. This floating book fair has been sailing the seven seas since 1914, and is now manned by 350 crew members and volunteer staff hailing from different parts of the world. The stock of about 6,000 book titles covers subjects including science, technology, sports, hobbies, cookery, religions, the arts, and philosophy. So climb aboard and be counted along with the 17 million visitors from 100 countries who have walked on its decks. MV Doulos is docked in Manila at Gate 1, South Harbor, Manila Pier 13 (Near Manila Hotel). For more information, log on to www.mvdoulos.org.

MUSIC SUMMIT 2007
12.12.2007
SM Mall of Asia Complex

FEEL alive and surround yourself with thousands of music enthusiasts at the SM Mall of Asia open grounds when **MTV Staying Alive Music Summit** for HIV/AIDS rocks out once again this year. Whether you prefer to just stand up and sway to the music or go all out slam dancing—Dec. 12 is definitely the night for awesome music from local and international acts, and of course, HIV/AIDS awareness. Gates open at 3 p.m., preshow starts at 4 p.m., and main show is at 6 p.m. Log on to www.mtvphil.com.

SEE what happened after the puppets from our childhood days grew up, living on their own in the big bad world—particularly on [illegible] Q. Be warned, there will be full puppet nudity. After their sold-out run in September, the puppets are back on stage on Dec. 1-12 at the Carlos P. Romulo Auditorium in RCBC Plaza, Makati City. This Tony Award-winning Broadway musical stars Rachel Alejandro, Aiza Seguerra, and [illegible]. Call 892-7078.



LISTEN to DJs Miguel Ramirez and Crash play old school R & B classics. Groove to its hypnotic beats as **Winston** brings you the W Records weekly Wednesday event at hot night spot Piedra [3/F, Fort Strip, Taguig, 10 p.m., T: 856-0318/19].

Schedules are subject to change without prior notice. For more information on events, log on to www.mag24-7.com or pick up your free copy of 24/7 Nocturnal Navigator at your favorite malls, bars, and restaurants. You may also text 24/7 GIGS to 2851 for Globe and Sun and 2951 for Smart. Submit your schedules before Tuesday to events@mag24-7.com & mag24_7@yahoo.com for inclusion in this column.

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Johnny Depp 'scared to death' about singing

DEPP AND BONHAM-CARTER. Test their pipes in Tim Burton's film version of "Sweeney Todd."

ONLY IN HOLLYWOOD

Ruben V. Nepales

LOS ANGELES—"I WAS scared to death, to be honest," Johnny Depp admitted in a recent London interview about taking on the singing role in Tim Burton's film version of Stephen Sondheim's "Sweeney Todd: The Demon Barber of Fleet Street."

In the press con held at the Claridge's Hotel, the star of the blockbuster "Pirates of the Caribbean" series disclosed how he overcame his fear and went on to sing and act so competently. Now, he's one of the Best Actor contenders in the awards season that's kicking into higher gear.

"I believe I said I sounded like a rutting stag, didn't I?," Johnny, breaking into an impish smile, volunteered how he described his crooning talents in our last meeting. In his first singing role, the actor doesn't grate on the ears at all!

On the contrary, his longtime friend and collaborator, Tim Burton's gamble has paid off—Johnny's character-driven singing is one of the many pleasures of "Sweeney Todd," which is one of the best films of 2007.

Johnny's epiphany on how to approach the singing role was the key to the acclaim now being heaped on his performance: "I thought it would be better to find the character through the process of singing the part, as opposed to trying to be a professional singer."

Serial killer

The actor wondered out loud at the risk that Warner Bros. Pictures and DreamWorks Pictures took in making a film about a man bent on revenge and the delicious meat pies that get made as a result: "Isn't it amazing—the idea that these large studios would do a musical about a serial killer that's virtually in black and white? And the studios go, 'We don't know if the guy playing Sweeney Todd can sing. Sure, let's do it (*laughter*)!' It's amazing!"

The movie is in color, but the only hue that dominates the screen is red—as in blood, lots of it! Tim's wife, Helena Bonham-Carter, Sacha Baron Cohen, Alan Rickman and Timothy Spall, actors also not known for their singing, turn in excellent performances.

Eschewing a zoot suit for a more rugged look, but still with his trademark fedora, the bespectacled actor wore torn jeans with a bandana on the left pocket, a denim jacket that he took off midway through the interview to reveal a printed shirt, leather wristbands, multiple rings on his fingers, and work boots that have definitely seen better days.

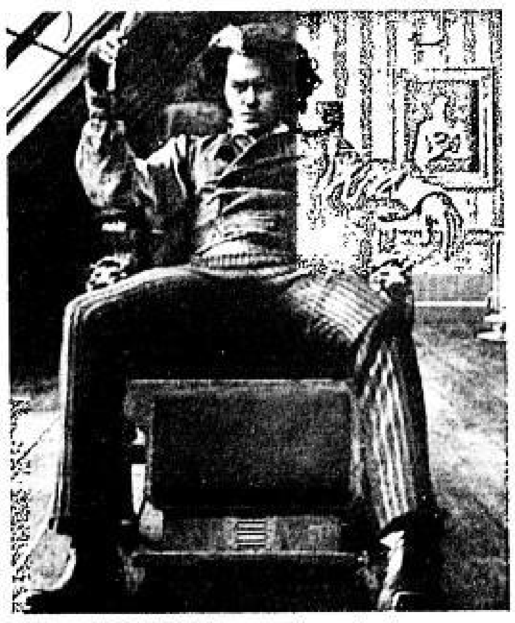
Ever the loving family man, Johnny talked fondly about his wife, French singer-actress, Vanessa Paradis, and their children, whom he always calls "kiddies." Excerpts:

This singing role must have been an incredible challenge…

I was so concerned because I didn't want to let Tim down. I was afraid I'd disappoint him. This was a very foreign process to me, because even though my background is in music, I was a guitar player!

The idea of standing in front of a microphone was daunting. But, the only way you

JOHNNY/ G2



THE ACCLAIMED actor plays the demon barber of Fleet Street.

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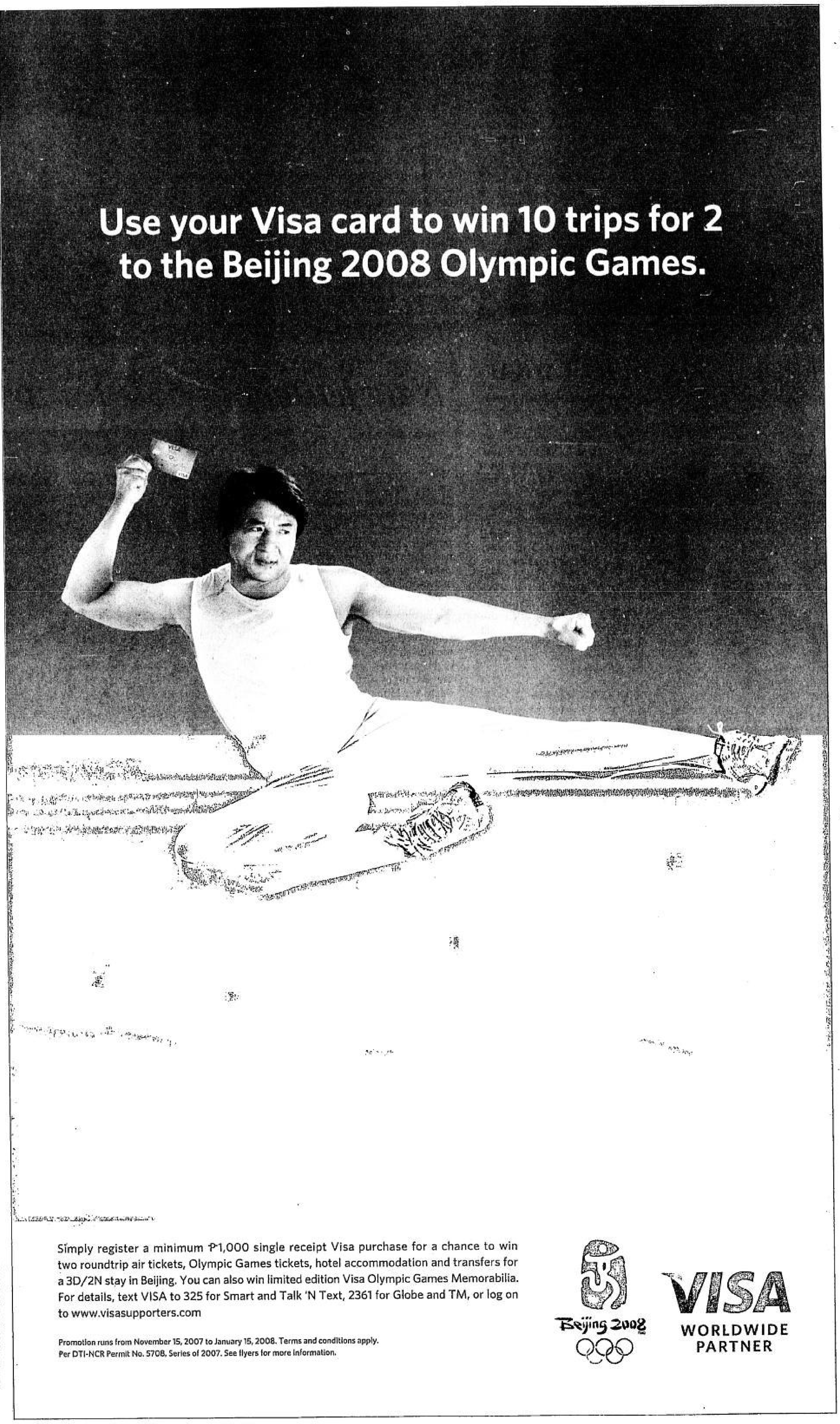

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Beijing 2008
VISA WORLDWIDE PARTNER

MESMERIZING "Incantation" number from hit "Tsinoy—Kaisa Ka!" musical revue.

MISS China was roundly upstaged by phenomenal ballet dancers in the Miss World pageant.

DAVAO. Cast as Padre Pio in Prime Foundation's stage play.

DAY IN, NIGHT OUT

Beauty is in the eye of the dazzled beholder

By Nestor U. Torre

THE NEW MISS WORLD, MISS China, was truly beautiful, but quite ironically, she was roundly upstaged in the beauty pageant's telecast last Saturday by the Chinese ballet dancers who stopped the show with their phenomenally brilliant guest performance.

In particular, the prima ballerina and her partner performed amazing feats of "acrobatic dance" that called to mind the prodigious style of the world-famous Bolshoi Ballet.

More phenomenal

Truth to tell, however, the Chinese ballet dancers' *pas de deux* was even more phenomenal than the Bolshoi's best efforts. What they did was to combine their prodigious ballet ability with China's even more prodigious acrobatics tradition.

The result was an amazing series of seemingly impossible moves and poses that left us breathless and incredulous: The prima ballerina dancing on point on her partner's shoulders—*then* on the top of his head; the ballerica held aloft in a radically "cantilevered" position that threatened to come undone, but didn't; the ballerina being "thrown" around like a weightless doll, but with absolute control and focus—etc.!

Even more impressively, these "impossible" feats were executed so beautifully that they didn't look like circus acts. It was still ballet, while being stunning acrobatics at the same time.

For the benefit of people who failed to watch the "Miss World" telecast, we wish that the pageant can be shown anew, especially for its "impossible" ballet number, thanks to the new Chinese superstars of dance. China's new Miss World is great, but its stunning ballet dancers come off best of all!

PRIME movers

Pete Roa may no longer be with us, but his initiatives and principles are being kept alive by his loving wife, children and friends, who have put up PRIME, the Pete Roa Integrated Media Endeavors Foundation.

At its recent press launch, the foundation introduced its PRIME movers: Headed by Boots Anson-Roa, PRIME's board of directors includes Marichu Maceda, Bibsy Carballo, Dr. Abdias Aquino, Raffy Evangelista, Jose Mari Chan, Ed Roa, Fred de la Rosa and this writer.

For its first project, PRIME is producing a play on the inspiring life of St. Padre Pio. Why this particular initial production? Boots revealed that Pete was a devotee of Padre Pio, especially when his illness had taken a turn for the worse, and that he had derived great consolation from his devotion.

Padre Pio will be played by the acclaimed stage, TV and film actor, Ricky Davao, who is already deep into rehearsals with the rest of the production's talented cast—Boots herself, Andy Bais, Shiela Asuncion, Nelson Caruncho, Mica Torre, Jan Alexander, and other stage stalwarts.

The play starts its run at Tiendesitas in the Ortigas commercial complex on Jan. 13, 2008, Pete's birth anniversary, and runs for an initial two weekends, after which, it will be taken on tour. If you want the play on Padre Pio to be performed in your parish, school, community or office, call Andy at 780-9210 or 0919 206-5424.

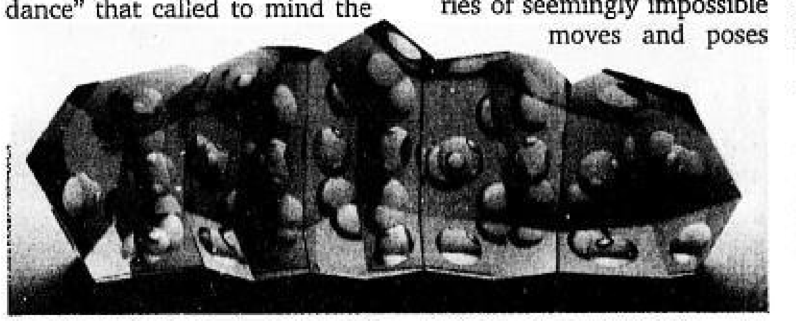
Through the glass, brightly

2007 has been a busy and productive year for glass sculptor Ramon Orlina, and his year-end schedule has been particularly hectic. In the span of only one month, he has participated in three exhibitions: His solo exhibit at Serendra's Art Verite gallery, a group show mounted by top Filipino artists in Indonesia, and another solo exhibition, "Abstract Emeralds," at Galerie Joaquin Main. Even more impressively, his exhibits have been sell-out events, making him one of the most appreciated artists in town.

Aside from his art, Ramon is also excited about his musical production, "Birhen ng Caysasay," some of the stars of which will be featured in a *tertulia* tonight in Taal, Batangas. Even better, the acclaimed religious musical will have more repeat performances early next year.

'Tsinoy—Kaisa Ka!'

Another well-received musical, the Kaisa Para sa Kaunlaran Foundation's "Tsinoy—Kaisa Ka!" revue, will have a repeat performance at 3 p.m. on Dec. 16, at Kaisa's own theater in Intramuros, sponsored by the Alumni Association of Uno High School. For tickets, call 252-1920 05 527-6086. More performances early next year are also in the works. One repeat performance deserves another!



"EMERALD CITY" wins pride of place in Orlina's latest exhibit.

Unique Yuletide bazaar

STREET SMART

Mandy Navasero

PET ME HOME IS A COINED "word" that means "take me home" for a pet that hopes you'd like it so much you'd buy it and take it home. You'll find the specialty corner at "Yule Go Wild! A Village Christmas Bazaar" at the Avenue Hall (Antel), Makati ave. cor. Gen. Luna st., Makati City from Dec. 14 to 16.

At Pet Me Home, you'll see 4-year-old Tyler petting baby sheep at Zoobic Safari or Kert and his mom playing with a Bengal tiger. Zoobic Foundation and the Yupangco Exhibits are promoters of this unique Christmas bazaar with an Animal Park.

The village bazaar also features an amazing animal show, in which viewers will see poodles dancing the waltz and the *tinikling*. A chimpanzee will also be shown shooting balls through a miniature basketball ring.

The animals are under the care of very good animal trainers. The shows are similar to those seen at Universal Studios in the US.

Aside from the Animal Park, the bazaar also boasts of 200 concessionaires offering unique items ideal for Christmas gift-giving.

TRAINER Lito gives his dancing poodles a hug.

Food extravaganza

There's a food extravaganza, Fashion Boulevard, Motor Kingdom, YL Finance, Aqua Primera and Yamaha. In the evening, there will also be magic demonstrations, fireworks display, and live entertainment. Call Yupangco Exhibits and Shows at 899-9824 or 898-3695.

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New watering hole for artists emerges

By Behn Cervantes

IN THE LATE '60S AND EARLY '70S, Manila artists were easy to find—because during that raucous period of the First Quarter Storm, there existed When It's a Grey November in Your Soul coffee shop, owned by Ishmael Bernal. The popular filmmaker gave the place his personal touch: It was unpredictable, exciting, literate—and welcoming to artists and kindred souls alike!

Bernie could turn a weak business night into an eventful happening. At 9:30 p.m. on Wednesdays, he would stage productions topbilled by Manila's theater elite. So, on a given Wednesday night, you might see a performance from the Barangay Theater Guild, starring Daisy Avellana, under Bert Avellana's direction.

Husband-mentor

Or, you could catch Ella Luansing being directed by Rolando Tinio, her husband-mentor. Or, you could watch an outstanding performance by Tita Muñoz in "Sorry, Wrong Number."

After Bernal left for a film scholarship in India, Grey November closed down. —Such was Bernie's personal impact on the café and its nightly patrons! So, its loyal patrons moved over to Indios Bravos, owned by Betsy Romualdez, where you would find Virgie Moreno, Nick Joaquin or Federico Alcuaz occupying the center table nightly.

MONTANO. Owner of Bellisimo.

Regularly, when the spirit so moved its habitués, they would request waiters to turn up the music of Jim Morrison and the Doors. Eventually, Indios would become the best disco in Manila, where the mood was extemporaneous and "happenings" were regularly mounted.

Free-wheeling atmosphere

Tourists walking along Mabini street would gather outside the disco's glass windows to find out what was going on inside. High society's Chona Kasten and Elvira Manahan would occasionally drop by to experience Indios' free-wheeling atmosphere.

Alas, soon after martial law was declared, the place was closed down! Other establishments have since attempted to recreate the ambiance of Grey or Indios. In fact, just three years before he passed away, Bernie opened another such watering hole in Quezon City. Unfortunately, it didn't work out.

So, when Cesar Montano invited me to La Dolce Vita, a group exhibit by artists who include the actor and Arnel Ignacio, I accepted. It was to be held in his Italian restaurant, Bellisimo. On the second floor of the establishment hung the works of Jes Evangelista, Grandier Bella, Raul Roco Jr., Florence Cinco and Norlito Meimban.

Styles

Their styles were distinctly different: Cinco focused on metal and the effects of light on scratched areas, while Evangelista experimented with shapes. Roco, on the other hand, produced altered shape and colors.

I convinced Cesar to turn his place into a watering hole for today's artists, where they can discuss artistic issues or stage poetry readings. With a number of educational institutions located in the area of Morato avenue, Bellisimo could well become today's Indios and Grey!

Johnny Depp 'scared to death' about singing

From page G1

can find out if you can do it is by doing it! So, I closed my eyes and dove in. I made a couple of demos and sent them to Tim and then, I got positive response from him. I hope it's all right—it's hard for me to tell!

How was that experience—going into a recording studio and making demos for the first time?

I did them with Bruce Witkin, who was in a band called The Kids with me. We grew up together. He's a bass player. I asked him, "Can I go into your studio and sing (*laughing*)?"

His first reaction was, he laughed a little bit, as he should have. Then, I went to the studio. It was very comforting that it was just the two of us. I've known the guy for 30 years—I trust him implicitly! I was able to take that leap with him!

Did you go to a vocal coach?

Initially, I was thinking very responsibly and decided, "I'm going to get a vocal coach, take singing lessons and do the whole thing!" But, before I was actually able to do that, I went into the recording studio with a friend of mine. It was a tiny garage. I started to record pieces of music just to see if I could sing.

At a certain point, the idea of going to a vocal coach, standing in front of a piano and doing scales seemed counterproductive. I thought it would be better to find the character through the process of singing the part, as opposed to trying to sound professional.

What was the hardest song to sing?

In a weird way, you'd think the most difficult song was "Epiphany," because this is the song where the character goes nuts while he's running around. On one level, it's the hardest song because it requires hitting certain notes and sustaining them.

But, ultimately, "Joanna" was probably the most difficult, because it's so soft, and it's such a heartfelt piece! There are notes that you have to sustain, and you have to remain somewhat pleasant (*laughing*).

Did you watch DVDs of "Sweeney Todd's" stage productions or listen to cast recordings?

The first thing that Tim gave me years ago was the Angela Lansbury-Len Cariou recording—I listened to that a lot! I saw the Patti LuPone-Michael Cerveris version onstage in New York. But, the most important thing I was able to do, aside from familiarizing myself with the material, happened a year ago while I was shooting "Pirates" in Palmdale, California.

I spent two hours every day from Los Angeles to Palmdale, then another two hours every night to go home. I put the "Sweeney Todd" CDs in the car stereo and listened. I had another version that was just the music, with melody lines played on piano to give me my notes. I would listen and sing embarrassingly!

After that, I was able to hit the notes, and I felt like I was in the arena where I'd be okay. So, I called Tim and said, "I think we're going to be all right." That was when I went into the studio with my friend—and the first time ever in my life that I belted a song from start to finish! The song was "My Friends." I just sang as best as I could and I got great coaching from my friend, Bruce, who would say, "Maybe you want to hold this note a little longer?"

Since Vanessa is a singer, did she give you tips on singing?

Vanessa was very helpful, because she was the initial victim. Before I sent my first recordings to Tim, I brought them home to her and said, "If I'm going to be fully embarrassed,I may as well play it for you!"

So, I played it to her to see if I was doing the wrong thing. She was very supportive about it. She's a very talented singer. She offered me all kinds of advice in terms of holding a note. More than anything, she gave me confidence. Oddly, she liked my voice. That was a miracle to me!

There's a lot of blood in this movie.

The funny thing is that my relationship with blood changes only when I do a movie with Tim (*laughter*). He always ends up being the person off camera squirting blood on my face. It was absolutely true on "Sleepy Hollow" and on this one.

DIRECTOR BURTON (left), with Depp.

You've worked with Tim many times before, but how was it this time with Helena also in the film?

It definitely took a few minutes to get used to, because Helena and Tim obviously know each other on a very different level (*laughter*). They both handled the situation very well.

You're very good at giving compliments.

During a day, if you don't make someone smile or feel good about himself, you're not a man! I don't think you're fulfilling your part of the bargain as a human being. I don't blow smoke just to make someone feel good.

Sweeney Todd is a driven man. What drives you?

I've never been particularly ambitious. I'm driven by the moment.

Sweeney was driven by revenge. What's your own attitude toward retribution?

JOHNNY/G3

The coconut tree...

From page G4

It was only when the sharp, hard object whacked into its bark again that it realized that something was terribly wrong—and it was so surprised that all its coco fruits came tumbling down to the ground!

Children

It was then that the children came running out of the house, out the gate and around the wall—until they rested against the oddly bent trunk of the coconut tree.

And this was when the coconut tree saw another extraordinary thing—for they were crying and sobbing as though their very hearts would break, and their tears were falling for it. *It!* An ordinary coconut tree that wasn't covered all over with twinkling lights and that didn't have a golden star on its head.

"But children," said the bewildered man who had been hacking at the trunk of the coconut tree, "your parents told me to cut it down because it ruins the view." But, the children wouldn't budge. They clambered up the coconut tree and stayed there until night fell and the stars came out—and their parents finally gave in.

So, the coconut tree wasn't cut down. And in the days to come, it would feel something else in its heart that wouldn't have anything to do with its old yearning to be a Christmas tree and to wear pretty lights and a shiny star on its head.

After Christmas, the coconut tree watched as the star was taken down, the gleaming balls were unhooked and the lights turned off and put away. Then, the Christmas tree was dragged out into the open and the coconut saw it clearly for the very first time. Why, it doesn't even have any fruits, it thought—what good is that?

Taken apart

Then, the tree was taken apart and washed with soap and water and the coconut realized that it wasn't even a real tree at all, only something made to look like one!

It sighed and shook its head, dropping a still-green coconut to the ground. Soon, the coconut tree would forget that it had ever wanted to be anything else than what it already was—but anyone who would get the chance to taste the *buko* juice from the tree's coconuts would always say that it reminded them, inexplicably, of Christmas!

Johnny Depp ...

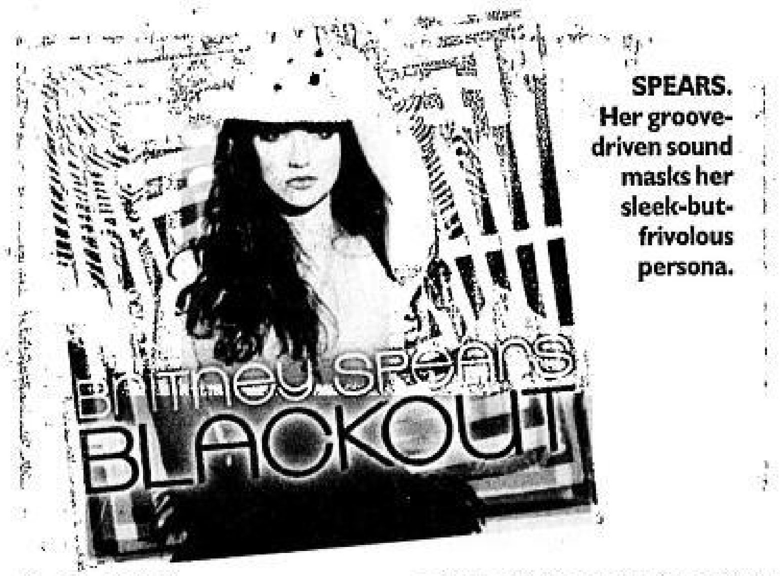
From page G2

In a perfect world, it's a fairy tale-like, beautiful notion to forgive and forget. I don't know if anyone is really capable of it. I have to say that I'm not (*laughter*). If someone has done me wrong, I will go out of my way to make sure that he understands that I'm onto him—maybe in a subtle way. It could also be karmic. I'm a firm believer in retribution!

E-mail rvnepales_5585@yahoo.com, and read his blog, "The Nepales Report," on www.inquirerbloggers.net/nepalesreport.

BONHAM-CARTER. Has the most challenging singing role in "Sweeney Todd."

New albums give music fans reason to dance and celebrate the holidays



SPEARS. Her groove-driven sound masks her sleek-but-frivolous persona.

By Rito P. Asilo

TIME FLIES WHEN YOU'RE having fun, so they say. But, fun, which best defines Britney Spears' ever-evolving musical taste, is hardly a word the troubled singer can use to describe her ascent to pop music heaven—and her consequent fall into tabloid hell.

In her surprisingly buzz-worthy album, "Blackout," the 26-year-old pop phenomenon acknowledges how much of a nasty-talk magnet she's been since she took the music world by storm *via* 1999's "…Baby One More Time."

In the second track, "Piece of Me," for instance, she complains about how she's been "Miss American Dream since I was 17/ Doesn't matter if I step on the scene or sneak away to the Philippines/ They still got pictures of my derrière in the magazine/ You want a piece of me…"

Sentiments

For people who have seen how she's been making a spectacle of herself since 2003's "In the Zone" (and her breakup with Justin Timberlake), it's hard to argue with her sentiments. As brickbats for her booze-driven antics and cheap stunts continue to pile up, Britney has managed to keep herself "in the zone"—with good reason!

Spears' 12-track fifth album is a dance-heavy collection that boasts of tunes that will make people forget their woes—and their drunken, giddy indiscretions. Sounds familiar?

Britney should thank her lucky stars for a first-rate team, composed of some of today's best producers like Nate "Danja" Hills ("Gimme More") and Bloodshy & Avant ("Radar"), who successfully incorporate Spears' present state of mind into an infectiously groove-driven sound that conveniently masks the singer's sleek-but-frivolus persona. The album likewise wins points for its coherent, sexy vibe.

Provocative

In provocative numbers like "Gimme More," "Get Naked," "Ooh Ooh Baby" and "Freakshow," the raunchy, sex-tinged teasing and defiant tone doesn't titillate anymore.

But, at least, "Blackout's" state-of-the-art polish, innovative dance beats and high energy will make you groove till you, well, blackout.

Spears, now the eighth best-selling female artist in American music history, may not live a charmed life, but, on the Billboard charts, her music does!

If you prefer a warmer, more Christmasy sound, turn to Jim Brickman's "Homecoming" or Erik Santos' "All I Want This Christmas," instead. Brickman's holiday album is the perfect companion, as you bask in the hazy glow of December's cold mornings.

JIM BRICKMAN
Homecoming

BRICKMAN. Memorable collaboration with Gerald Levert.

Instrumentals

The 46-year-old new-age music proponent continues to win over pop jazz lovers with his richly melodic, piano-driven instrumentals and earnest collaborations with guest vocalists and musicians.

"Homecoming," like 1997's "The Gift" and 2003's "Peace," is no exception: Guest performances come from Lonestar's Richie McDonald (in the soon-to-be-classic, "Coming Home for Christmas"), David Klinkenberg ("Joy"), Tracy Silverman, Peter White, frequent collaborator, Anne Cochran ("I Heard the Bells on Christmas Day"), and the late R&B artist, Gerald Levert.

Levert recorded the poignant lullaby, "My Angel (Christmas)," for Brickman's "Escape" album last year. The latter wanted to rework the song with Christmas lyrics for "Homecoming," but the R&B luminary—who was Brickman's classmate in high school—passed away before that could happen. Indeed, a beautifully fitting swan song!

Erik Santos

SANTOS. Much-improved musical aesthetic.

Seasonal favorites

On the local front, Erik Santos lends his much-improved musical aesthetic to Christmas carols in the Yuletide collection, "All I Want This Christmas."

His "Silent Night/Oh Holy Night" medley is a polished, beautifully rendered R&B reworking of those seasonal favorites.

Happily, he's also learned that less is more—there's hardly any trace of the "shouting" bravado that got Santos the "Star in A Million" title years ago.

In the winsome "Christmas Is" and "I Dream of Christmas," Erik embraces the holiday spirit with subtle confidence and exudes heartfelt warmth in each song—most notably in his cover of "The First Noel." He likewise gives Martin Nievera's "All I Want This Christmas" a more intimate interpretation.

But, the album's best songs are its Filipino tracks, "Ngayong Pasko" and the sweetly somber "Tag-ulan sa Pasko," which deftly demonstrate how the baladeer has evolved as a recording artist through the years!

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YULETIDE STORY FOR YOUNG READERS

The coconut tree that dreamed of Christmas

By Noelani Torre

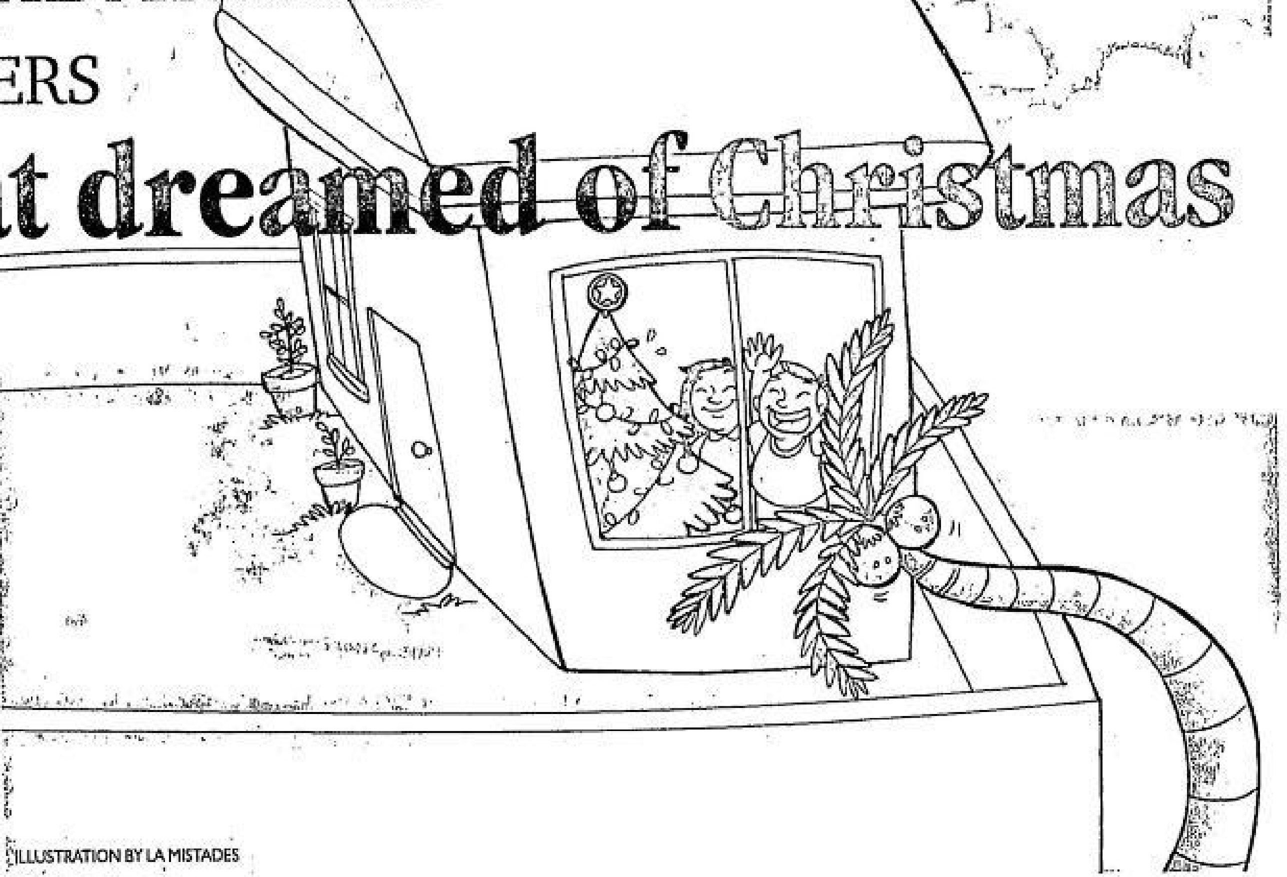

ILLUSTRATION BY LA MISTADES

NEAR THE EDGE OF A WARM, CLOUDY SEA grew a young coconut tree that was thinking thoughts and dreaming dreams that you can be sure no other coconut tree has ever thought or dreamed before.

The tree didn't look any different from the rest of the palms in the grove, though chance had it growing farther away from its siblings and nearer a wall that wrapped around a big house glittering with windows.

Very odd

Perhaps it was where it was sown that made it different inside, or perhaps it had already been that way even before it had taken root—however it may have come about, one thing is certain and that is that it was a very odd coconut tree, indeed.

While the other trees around it drowsed under the hot sun or exchanged insults with the unruly *habagat*, the young coconut would be dreaming about the extraordinary thing it would see inside the big house every year when the cold season would set in.

It all began when the coconut tree had grown tall enough to look over the wall and through the fancy glass windows of the big house. The first thing it had seen was a strange-looking tree with even stranger-looking leaves all over its body.

Then, people had come and hung shimmering balls on its branches, draped it with little twinkling lights in all the colors of the rainbow, and crowned it with a bright golden star that seemed to wink at the coconut tree, promising the coming of even greater things.

"What is that?," it had asked the *amihan*, the *habagat's* cooler, kinder sister.

"That," she said as she rustled through the young coconut's leaves, "is a Christmas tree." And then she told the curious coconut about beribboned boxes called presents, tables groaning under the weight of food, children flushed with excitement and fat from too many sweets, and the many other things that people do during the season called Christmastime.

As it listened to all these wondrous things and watched the Christmas tree's lights twinkling through the grey of dusk, a wish sparked and caught fire in the young coconut's heart. To be a Christmas tree, it thought wistfully, was probably the very best thing that a tree could ever be, and it sighed a great big sigh and dropped one of its coco fruits even though it was still green.

Little beetles

From that time on, the young coconut slowly ceased to care about the sun, the sand, the rain, or even the pesky little beetles that would sometimes crawl up its trunk and nibble on its leaves.

Even after Christmas was over and the strange tree had been taken down and put away, the young coconut still thought and dreamed about it. This went on for days, weeks and months until the *habagat* left in a flurry of storms and the *amihan* made her cool, crisp way across the sea and it was Christmastime once again.

Another Christmas came and went and still the coconut tree kept dreaming and wishing and sighing. Its yearning was so great that it weighed it down and instead of growing upward, it grew sideways and over the wall—and its coco fruit would drop periodically even though they were still green!

One day, in the heat of summer, two children came running and laughing out of the big house and stopped to stare agog at the sight of the coconut tree that was now not quite so young and had grown very oddly indeed, with its palmy head hanging over the wall and the ground beneath it littered with coco fruit.

Strange

"That's strange," said the girl to her brother. "I never noticed that before. Why, that tree is all crooked and there are coconuts all over the ground!" "So what, it's a coconut tree," said her brother who was younger and didn't know as much.

"Silly," she said, poking him in the stomach, "the coconuts should fall when they're brown already, not when they're still green like that. But, I bet the water in them will still be sweet." And they proceeded to gather all the nuts they could, with one eye on the tree just in case more would come falling down.

By this time, the coconut tree had gotten roused from its usual daydream of twinkling lights and golden stars. It watched the children scamper back into the house with two coconuts each and come slowly back out sometime later, sipping coconut water from straws stuck into the fruit.

"This is good *buko* juice," they said. "Really good!" And it was, for the fruit was heavy with the dreams and yearning of the coconut tree and had a distinctive flavor that inexplicably reminded the children of Christmas.

They considered the coconut tree once more and walked out the gate, around the wall and right up to its oddly bent trunk for a closer inspection. The coconut tree held itself very still as small hands and feet clambered up its back and the still summer air was suddenly alive with the chatter of young voices.

Fruit

"This is a weird tree," said the boy when he sat down. "But, it sure is easy to climb," said his sister, whose legs were dangling in the air. They played a lot on and around the tree that summer and the coconut tree soon got used to being sat on and dangled from and the still-green fruit that would fall would always get picked up.

Then, the rains came and the children stopped coming. Before long it was Christmastime again and the coconut tree dreamed once more about wearing a golden star on its head, though this time it would also dream about high, happy children's voices.

One brisk afternoon in December, the coconut tree was too preoccupied with waiting for the lights of the Christmas tree to come on, and at the same time watching the door of the house for the children who might come bursting through, that it didn't even notice the first cut that was made on its trunk.

THE COCONUT/ G3

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SATURDAY Special

Mary J. Blige feels 'Growing Pains'

LOS ANGELES—EVERYONE loves a good comeback story. And this time last year, Mary J. Blige was the central character in her own inspiring fable.

The husky-voiced Queen of Hip-Hop Soul was just days away from a career-crowning achievement: The artist with the most Grammy Award nominations (eight) for her 2005 studio album, "The Breakthrough."

The aptly titled release, featuring the megahit single, "Be Without You," musically symbolized Blige's hard-won, years-long fight against the personal demons—a troubled childhood, drug addiction, an abusive relationship—that fueled the raw, painful honesty of her fan-winning artistry.

Perspective

On the eve of flying to South Africa to begin promoting her December follow-up album, "Growing Pains," the ever-frank Blige shared her perspective on life after "The Breakthrough." Excerpts:

Was it intimidating going back into the studio after the success of "The Breakthrough"?

We were coming out of a valley, so to speak, with 'The Breakthrough.' Everyone had run away and turned their backs on us—and that was cool. We love them still, and we forgive them. But, it's been easier doing 'Growing Pains,' because now you don't have anything to try to conquer.

It's like you've accomplished everything you set out to do. You've done the hard work to be where you are. Now, though, you've got to work harder to deliver based on that confidence. Not that I was lax on anything, or that I take things for granted, because "The Breakthrough" did so well. I worked just as hard—maybe even harder—on this album.

Collaborators

Among your collaborators on this new project is Ne-Yo...

Ne-Yo is an incredible kid! He nailed everything he set out to do. I began writing for this album in February around the time of the Grammys and the Academy Award parties. I started out with this concept of growing pains, because that's how I was feeling during the Grammys: 'Am I good enough for this? Do I deserve all this?' But, something in my head said, 'Yes, you are. Now, you're forced to grow up rapidly in this area, in order to achieve and get the things you want!'

I read everything to Ne-Yo. He came back with not only some of the words that were in my poem,

MARY J./H2

BLIGE. Her personal demons fueled the raw, painful honesty of her artistry.

Three-month old MyPhone, now the hottest DAS mobile phone

It's only been three months and already MyPhone is the fastest selling Dual Active SIM (DAS) mobile phone brand in the Philippines.

MyPhone's rising claim to fame is its Dual Active SIM (DAS) mobile phones.

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T22 Duo is also equipped with multimedia functions that you just can't live without: a 2 megapixel camera, video recorder, media player, expandable memory up to 1GB, Bluetooth and a large 2.4-inch touch screen.

But they didn't stop there. While the T22 Duos were flying off the shelves of Manila's biggest dealers, MyPhone slid in another covetable phone, the Slyder. The MyPhone Slyder is the first Dual Active SIM (DAS) phone with slide function. Monumental for being the first Dual Active SIM (DAS) slider in the world, the Slyder also comes in five cool colors: jet black, pearl white, wine red, olive green and bronze.

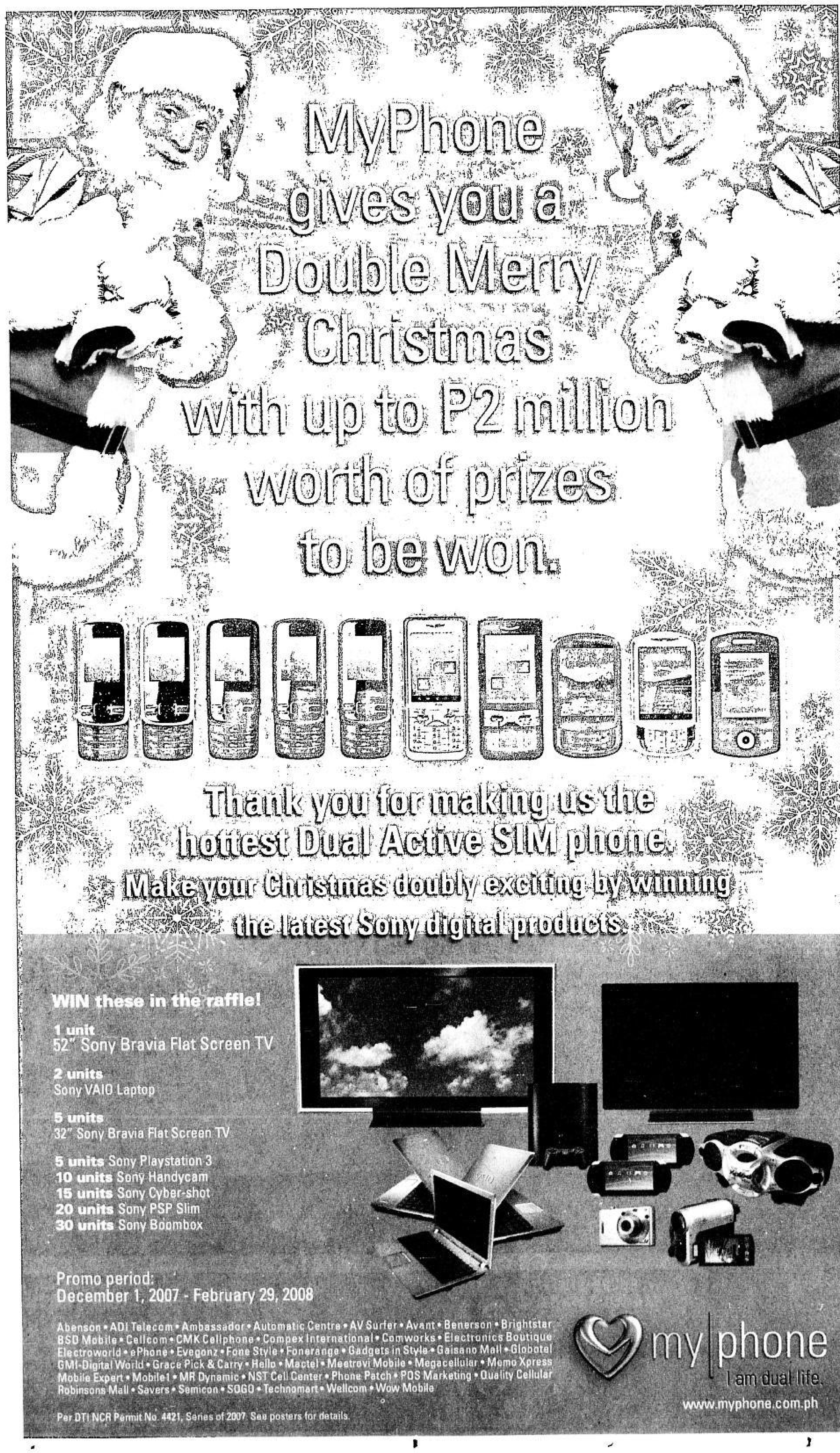
With the strong Dual Active SIM (DAS) platform, MyPhone has taken to heart the slogan, **I am Dual Life**, promising more innovations in the Dual Active SIM (DAS) category. MyPhone users can now live a dual life with their Dual Active SIM phones, juggling work and play or friends and family.

Look no further. You can find the MyPhone Dual Active SIM (DAS) units in all leading dealers in Manila and key provincial cities. That's over 800 stores nationwide and still growing.

From Ortigas to Ozamis. MyPhone promises quality not just with their products but also with after sales service. With 31 service centers nationwide, from Alabang to Baguio, Tarlac to Naga, Zamboanga to Pasig, MyPhone has committed itself to customer satisfaction.

A Solid Group behind MyPhone. Solid Group, the company which brought in world-renowned brands such as Sony, Sanyo, TCL and Kia Motors, and manages MyDestiny cable and high-speed Internet is the company behind MyPhone. With a reputation for quality and service, MyPhone is built on a solid foundation.

One hot promo. As a generous "thank you" for its rapid success, MyPhone has created a promotion that is giving more than P2 Million worth of Sony prizes away to people who purchase any MyPhone unit from December 1 – February 29. Big prizes like a Bravia 52-inch flat screen, Playstation 3s and PSPs to name a few are up for grabs. It's MyPhone's way of saying "thank you" for making them the hottest DAS mobile phone!



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Big-screen adaptation of fantasy novel falls short of expectations

By Noelani Torre

THOSE WHO HAVE READ AND liked the books of Philip Pullman's "His Dark Materials" trilogy, among them critics and award-giving bodies, more or less agree that his novels have the makings of classics.

Like all the best fantasy fiction, Pullman's trilogy—consisting of "The Golden Compass," "The Subtle Knife" and "The Amber Spyglass"—succeeds in creating a world of its own that a reader can get completely immersed in. A film version of any of these books, then, needs to achieve the same results. If it does not, it would be nothing less than a failed adaptation.

Unfortunately, this is what New Line Cinema's take on the first book ends up "achieving." Joining the ranks of films that have been unsuccessful in translating book magic to movie magic, the novel's film version, "The Golden Compass," (the novel's original title is "Northern Lights") has an able cast and seamless special effects, but it could leave you cold.

Alternate world

The story takes place in an alternate world, where people's souls are called daemons and can be found not inside them, but outside They take the form of animal shapes that embody their personalities. In this world, an authoritarian group, the Magisterium, seeks to impose its control on everything and everyone, committing terrible acts on children in the process.

The heroine of the tale is Lyra (Dakota Blue Richards), a plucky 12-year-old orphan being raised by scholars in the fictional Jordan College at Oxford. Her only family, it seems, is an explorer/scientist uncle, Lord Asriel (Daniel Craig), whose visit one day is the precursor to the arrival of the icily beautiful Mrs. Coulter (Nicole Kidman) and Lyra's subsequent journey to the North in search of lost children and the truth about a mysterious substance called Dust.

Fascinating

Now, this is a fascinating world—one that Pullman brings to vivid life in the book, but in the film, it is curiously flat and, despite the CGI-enhanced details, two-dimensional. Sadly, the movie is an anemic version that has been stripped of complexities. It has been reduced to a series of scenes that move the story forward, but don't take your heart along with it.

Directed by Chris Weitz from his own script, the film is a triumph of visual-effects technology, but not even the most impressive visuals can make up for the slackness of the narrative and the half-baked realization of a reality that demands intricacy and elaboration. The visuals—as well as the cast—do make the movie more enjoyable to watch, however.

RICHARDS. Plays the movie's plucky, 12-year-old protagonist.

The fresh-faced Richards is charming and spunky, while Kidman is perfect as the icy and slinky Mrs. Coulter. Craig only appears for a few minutes (his role is merely used as an introduction to his future appearances in the sequels) and is overshadowed by a CGI polar bear with armor and the baritone voice of Ian McKellen.

To be fair, "The Golden Compass" is enjoyable enough, but it should have been nothing less than brilliant. Perhaps they'll get it right the second time around, but do yourself a favor—read the books!

Mary J. Blige feels...

From page H1

but with songs that matched up to where I'm going and where I'm at in my life. He's such a sweet man—a gentleman who respects women. When I got a chance to sit down with him and talk, he totally undersrtood! You know, men don't usually relate to or understand women on that level.

You're seen on TV with a car commercial, and you've been acting occasionally in the past. Now that you've conquered the music world, is acting the next frontier?

It's my goal to do more acting if it works for me. I'm not trying to get into the film business just because I'm Mary J. Blige. I don't want to make a fool of myself with everybody laughing and talking about me like a dog. I want to get it right (*laughs*). Scripts have come my way—it's just a matter of choosing the right one.

I went to read for a film role, and I could have gotten the part. It was for a director who, being new himself, didn't want to take a chance on a new person. So, he wanted to go with a seasoned actress. But, the feedback I got behind the scenes was that my reading was great. So, the word is out that I can do this.

Was it a dramatic role?

Yes. I would have played the part of a woman, Linda, whose husband was a crooked cop who got killed. In the role, I was mourning for my husband. So, I had to go to dark places in my own life to do that. I remembered mourning over my cousin when he got killed, and I remembered an abusive relationship. I had to rewind my life.

Events

The songs that made me go there were Roy Ayers' "Everybody Loves the Sunshine" and "Searching"—songs I was playing heavily when those events were happening in my life. I didn't like going there, but I had to for that reading. I kept crying even when I was in the car afterward.

Getting back to music, who's at the top of your wish list to work with?

When and if I do a jazz album, I'd want to work with Anita Baker. I love her! I'm a huge fan. There's also the possibility to do a gospel album. Everyone always asks that question, and I believe I would.

Growing up, were gospel and jazz major musical influences?

Not really. It was more whatever was playing in my house. When I was a little girl when I was about 4 years old, I remember hearing 'Everybody Loves the Sunshine.' That's the reason why I know who Roy Ayers is. My father was a musician—a bass player—and he had a band.

From his end, it was about everything from Parliament to the Grateful Dead. My mother was the soul chick. She listened to everything-Candi Staton, Gladys Knight, Dorothy Moore, Sam Cooke, Bobby Womack and Otis Redding. She'd be around the house singing their songs.

Evolution

If you could use only one phrase or one word to describe the evolution of Mary J. Blige, the artist, what would that be?

Then: Starting to wake up. Now: Aware! (*laughs*)

Now that you're aware, what would you do differently if you were just starting out?

I would probably behave. (*laughs*) I can't change what I was because I didn't know any better. But if I'd have known then what I do now, I wouldn't have done any of that stupid stuff.

Wouldn't that have affected your music, given that it's derived from your experiences?

That's true. But, you know, showing up 10 hours late for an interview or not showing up at all doesn't have anything to do with anything. That's just stupidity! I wish I'd done that differently instead of (in a mimicking voice), 'I'm not going. I'm hung over. I'm staying home!' (*laughs*)

Meanwhile, you've got interviewers and

MARY J./H3

AT THE CINEMAS

THX

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GREENBELT 1	1 ENCHANTED	2 THE GOLDEN COMPASS					
GREENBELT 3	1 THX THE GOLDEN COMPASS GUARANTEED SEATS	2 THX THE GOLDEN COMPASS GUARANTEED SEATS	3 GONE BABY GONE GUARANTEED SEATS	4 EASTERN PROMISE GUARANTEED SEATS	5 FRED CLAUS GUARANTEED SEATS		
ALABANG TOWN CENTER	1 THX THE GOLDEN COMPASS	2 THE KINGDOM	3 EASTERN PROMISES	4 ENCHANTED	5 THE GOLDEN COMPASS		
AYALA CENTER CEBU	1 THE GOLDEN COMPASS	2 30 DAYS OF NIGHT	3 THE NANNY DIARIES	4 THE KINGDOM			
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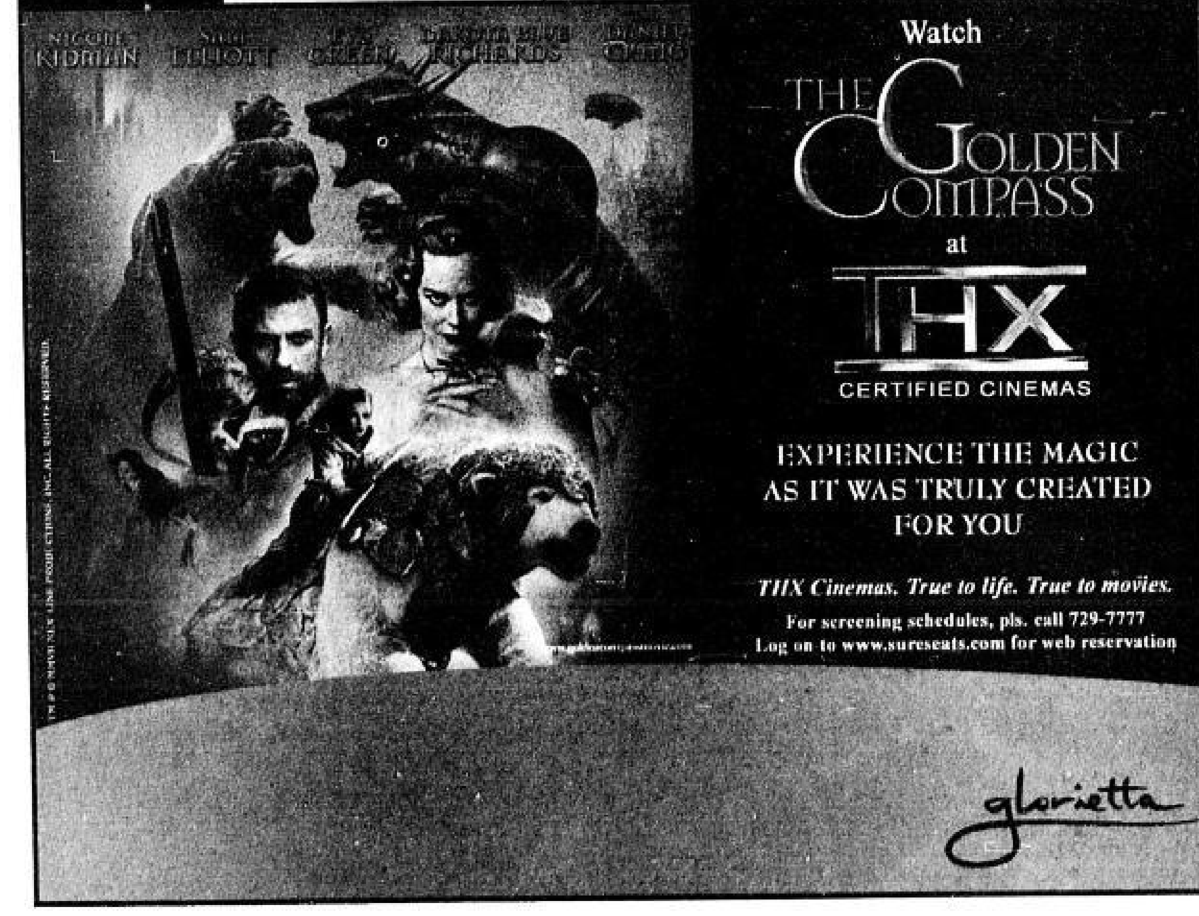
glorietta	Philippine Madrigal Singers with Robert Seña and Isay Alvarez December 8; 6pm; Glorietta 4 Park
GREENBELT	The Dawn Jazz Nights December 5; 7:30pm; Greenbelt 2 Al Fresco Area
ALABANG TOWN CENTER	Southern Musicians Concert December 9; 5pm; Town Plaza
AYALA CENTER CEBU	FREE Christmas Gift Bag for every P500 worth of purchase. See leaflets for details. Per DTI-Cebu Permit No. 584, Series of 2007 December 1 to 31
MARKET! MARKET!	Christmas Shoes: A Christmas Musicale December 6; 7pm; Activity Center
Onstage	Repertory Philippines presents FIDDLER ON THE ROOF November 9 - December 16, 2007 For inquiries, pls. call 887-0710 or visit www.repertory-philippines.com
Ayala MUSEUM	WATER: THE MEDIUM by Juvenal Sanso November 24 to January 13, 2008; Ground Floor Gallery For more info, pls. call 757-7117 to 21 loc. 14 or email museum_inquiry@ayalamuseum.org
TriNoma	Christmas Chorale featuring Martin Nievera December 6; 6pm; Activity Center Rhythm Academy: Sam Concepcion with the Augustinian Larks December 9; 6pm; Activity Center



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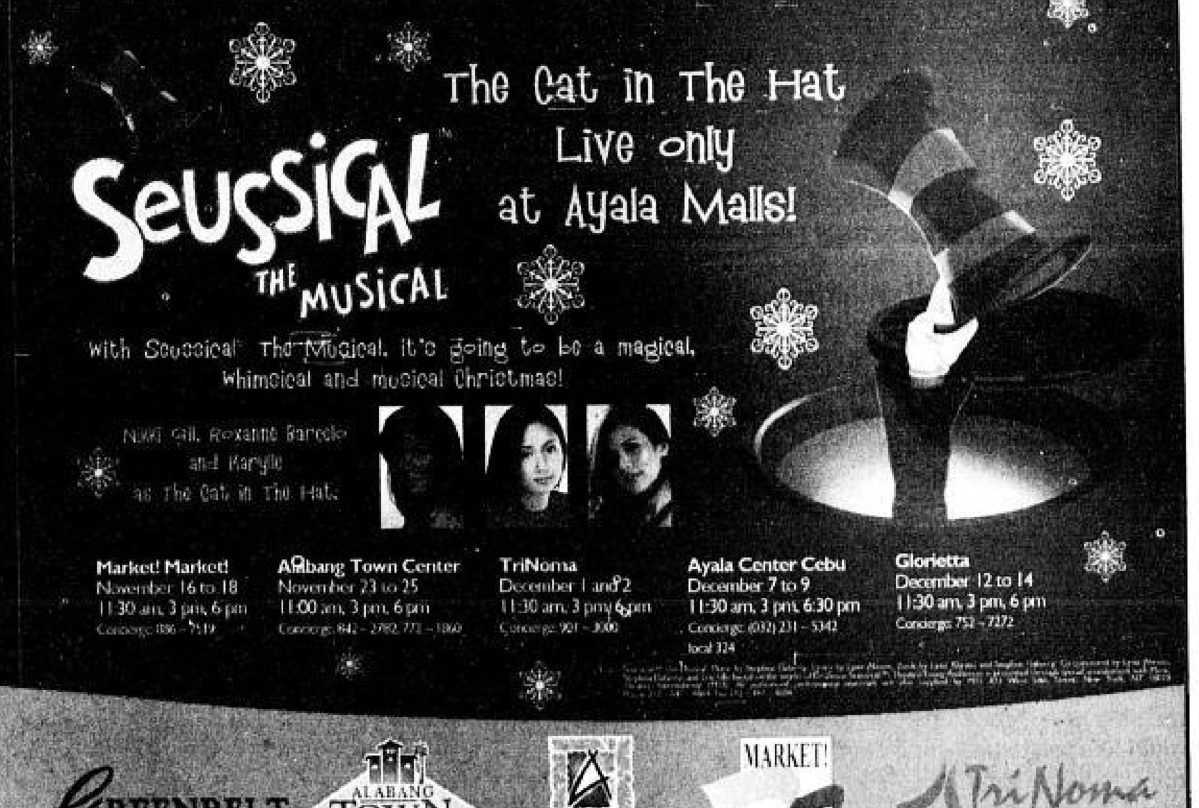

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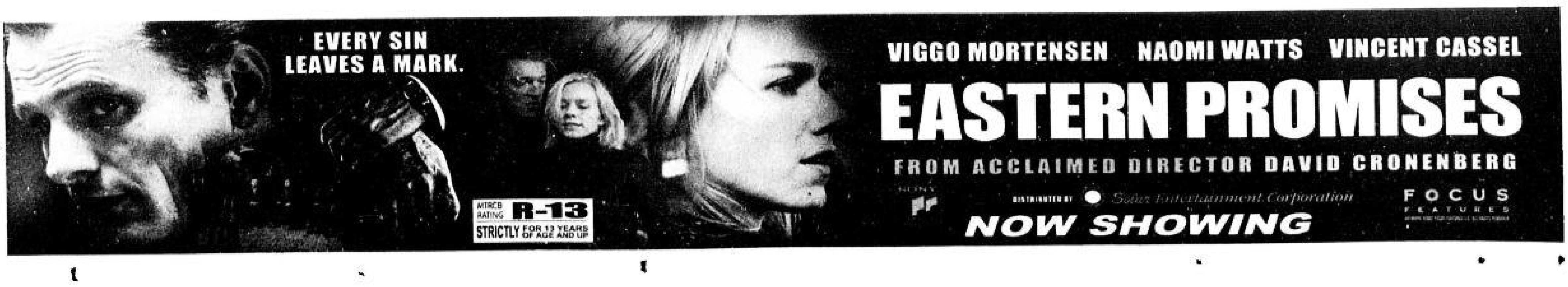
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'Oprah Effect' makes itself felt in US politics

By Nestor U. Torre

FOR MANY YEARS NOW, OPRAH Winfrey has been setting the standard for stars' involvement in boosting laudable initiatives and inspiring the populace. In fact, her efforts and their results have even been given a name—"The Oprah Effect."

That effect has been considerable in various spheres. In literature, her Book Club on TV has encouraged readers to buy the novels it features monthly—in the millions of copies.

In education and the empowerment of young women, she has spent $40 million of her own money to put up a pioneering school for leadership in South Africa. And Oprah's Angel Network has spent even more millions to help many more causes, organizations and individuals all over the world.

Most influential

As a result, Winfrey has been cited as the most influential woman in the US, among many other distinctions. In fact, some political king- and queenmakers have opined that, if she ran for president of the United States, she would stand a good chance of winning.

But Oprah has decided that running for political office isn't for her—to the great relief of more ambitious male and female politicians!

WINFREY. Has been setting the standard for stars' involvement in boosting laudable initiatives.

Instead, she has decided to use her considerable persuasive clout with the public to support the presidential candidate of her choice—Sen. Barack Obama. She is speaking up for him in the Iowa primary, and political analysts are excitedly waiting to see how the so-called Oprah Effect will play out for the first time in the field of politics.

Early indications suggest that the effect could be considerable. This early, Obama has, for the first time, surged ahead of heretofore Democratic presidential frontrunner Sen. Hillary Clinton, 28 percent to her 25 percent. In addition, Obama has been rating higher with women voters that Clinton—a development that has surprised observers, who presumed that the gender factor would favor the female candidate.

What's going on? Political observers now believe that, in voters' eyes, Obama represents change, while Clinton is associated with traditional politics—and Obama is scoring higher in surveys because many American voters want change.

If the situation favors Obama at this early age, it's likely that Winfrey's active endorsement in the next few days could add to his advantage.

Presidential nomination

Some observers rue Winfrey's preference for Obama, because it could help prevent Clinton from clinching the Democratic presidential nomination—and possibly becoming the first woman to become president of the United States of America. Since Oprah is herself female, it is deemed ironic that she would have a hand in this happening.

For Winfrey, however, the racial factor could have greater potential and actual value, as far as historical significance is concerned. Or, she may simply feel that, regardless of this of that factor, Obama would make the best president of the US at this point in time.

Whichever motivation actually holds sway, the power of The Oprah Effect in this latest and most significant instance cannot be gainsaid!

Mary J.

From page H2

people at photo shoots waiting for you who don't care about any of those excuses. They're there to do their jobs, and you don't show up! And now you're difficult!

Early on, you were tagged "the Queen of Hip-Hop Soul." Do you ever tire of that moniker?

There's nothing I can do about it, because it's something I've earned. I would never disrespect it. Hip-hop is not something that you ultimately hear. It's a culture we grew up in, and it became us. This is the way we think, walk and talk. There's intelligence in hip-hop.

Extension

A person doesn't have to slump all over, curse or act stupid to do hip-hop. Look at Erykah Badu, D'Angelo or Jill Scott. They live in that culture, and you can hear it in their music. It's what others labeled neo-soul, which is just an extension of hip-hop/soul. Jill Scott carries herself pretty well. A Tribe Called Quest gave us jazz influences. I also loved the Jungle Brothers. If you knew who they are, then you're really a hip-hopper. They made you feel good about our culture.

What are your thoughts on the ongoing controversy about rap lyrics?

Honestly, it's not just a song's fault or a lyric's fault. Parental guidance is key. You can have your child listen to all that, but it's up to you to say, 'Look, that's what they do, but this is what you're going to do! You can't judge them for what they do. But, as your parent, this is what I would like you to do, and it's the right thing!' It's society as a whole that's the problem. It's not about a song doing the killing or making women promiscuous.

Will you still be singing at age 50 or 60?

That's up to the people. If they request it, I'll be there. But, I'm not going to force myself into people's lives! *Reuters*

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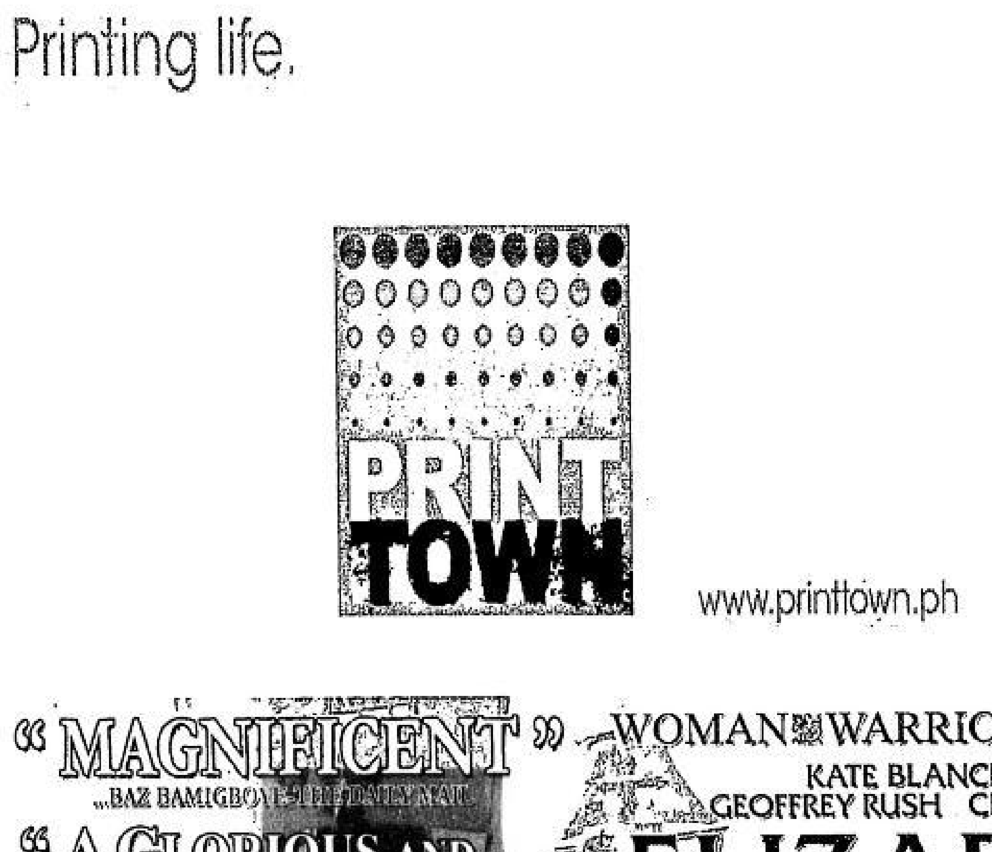

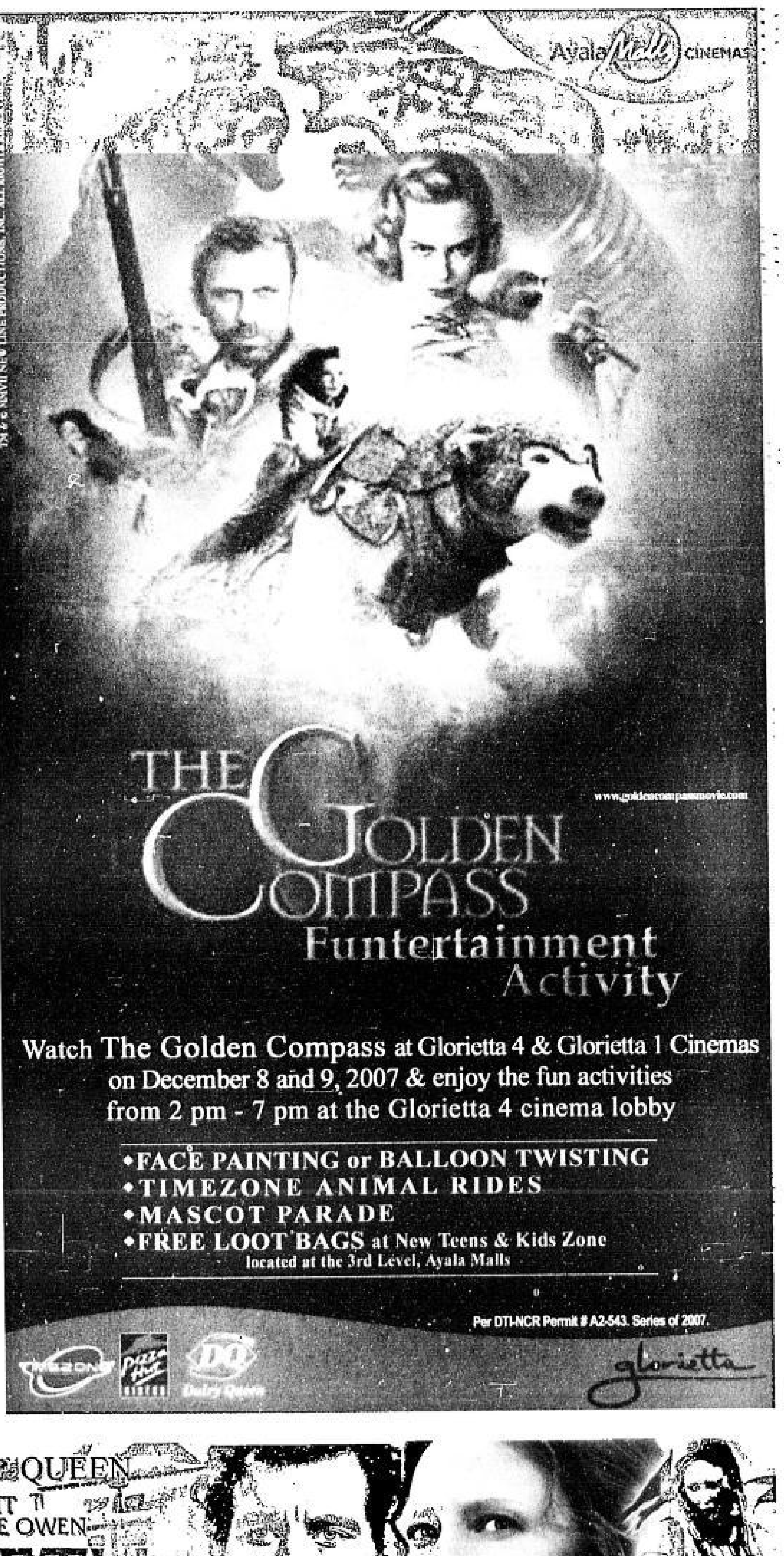

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EUROPE, NOW WITHIN REACH

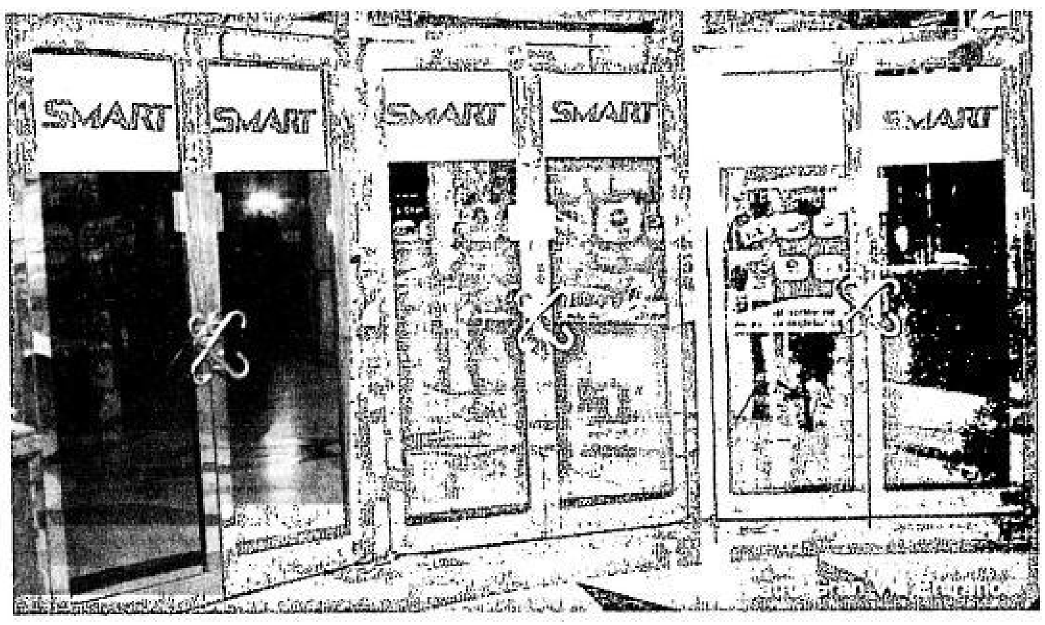
SMART launches OFW SIM in Spain, Madrid

November 10 was a special occasion to thousands of Overseas Filipino Workers making a living in Europe. SMART, once more, broke communication barriers as the telco giant unveiled the OFW SIM.

Raffles and contests were held during the event where exciting gifts and prizes were given away. The highlight of the night was when Martin Nievera and Rachel Alejandro put on an amazing show much to the delight of our beloved OFWs. Another part of the program that raised their spirits was the launch of the actual SIM, which allows them to stay connected to their loved ones back here in the Philippines. "Ok itong OFW SIM a! Bilhan ko na mga officemates ko..." said a very grateful attendee. The event was truly a memorable one for OFWs in Europe, which was a product of SMART's ingenuity and sincere objective to serve Filipinos here and abroad.

Pick a Prize

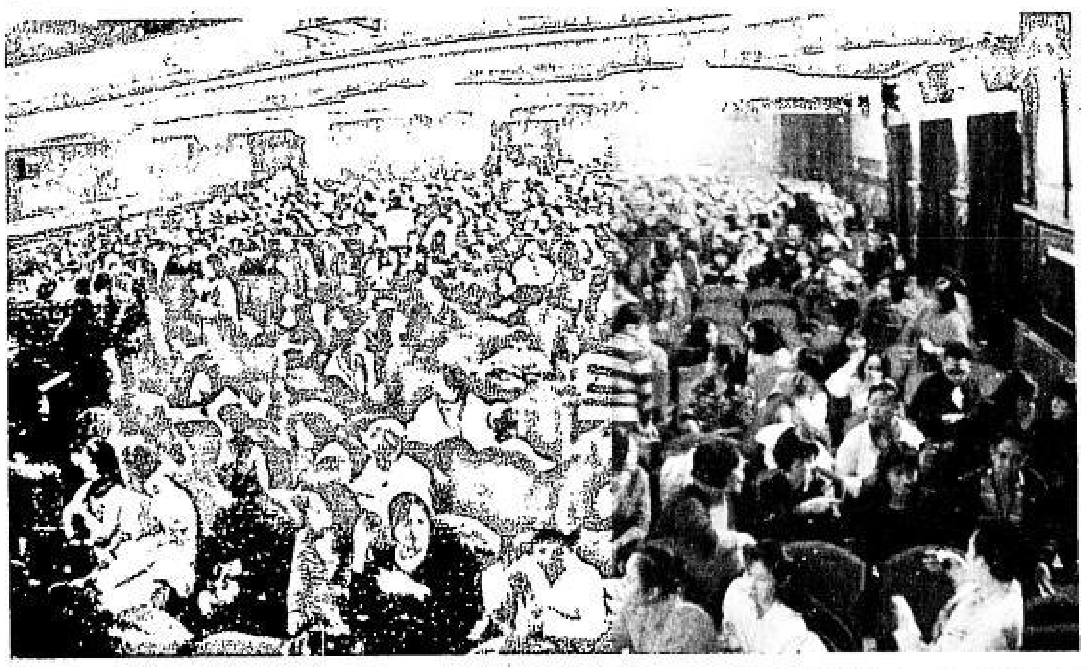
Smart selling area



Martin and Rachel

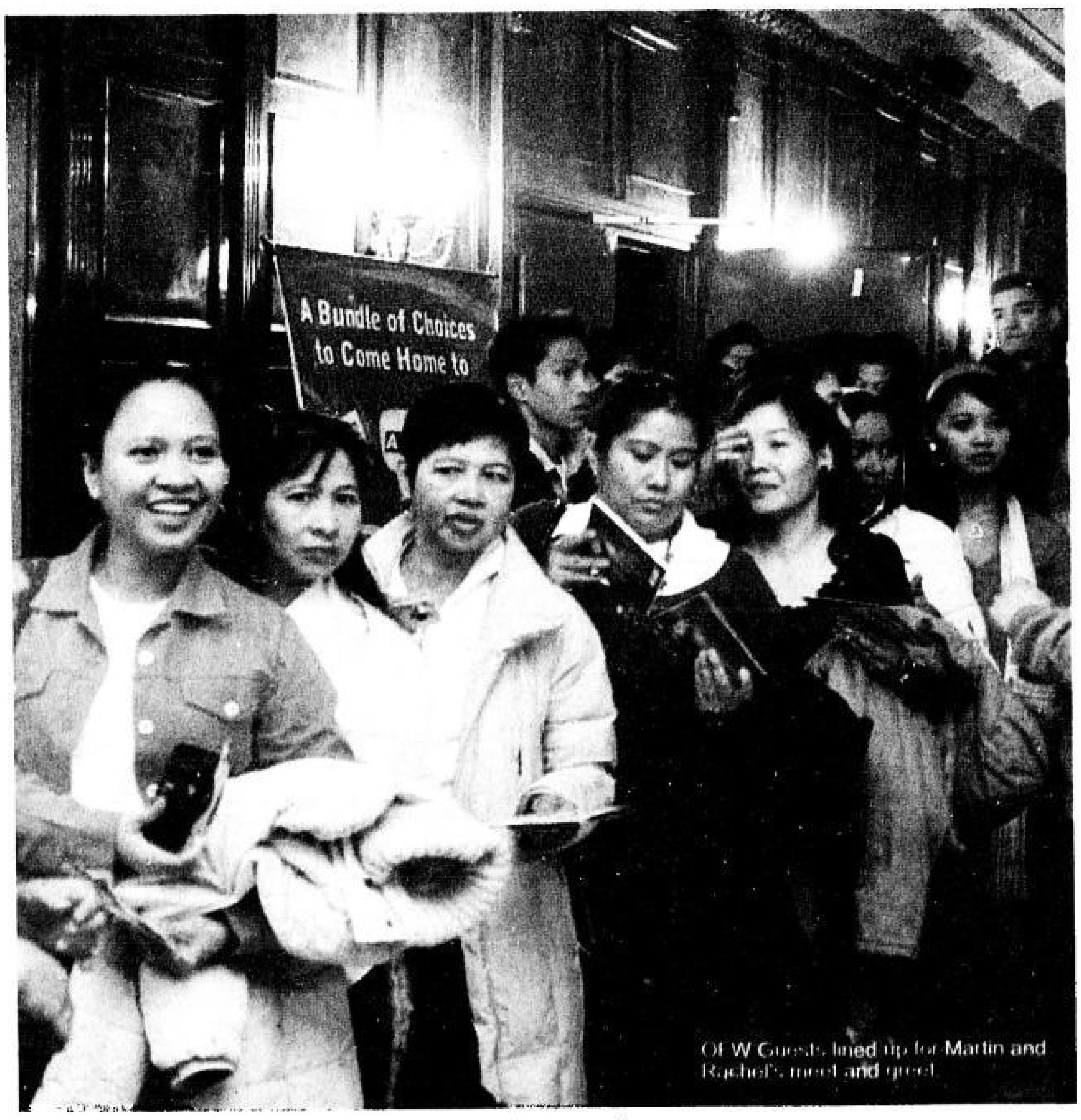
Phil. Embassy Consul General Cookie Feria, Smart Group Head Annie Naval, Smart Dept Head for Mainstream Acquisition Kathy Carag, TFC Europe Managing Director Raffy Jison, (back) News Bureau Chief for Europe Danny Buenafe

Jenny [illegible], Smart Event Supervisor, Pinnie Bonifacio, Events Manager Allie Dela Cruz, Marketing manager of TFC Europe



Girlie Rodis (Rachel)s Manager), Raffy Jison, TFC Europe Managing Director, Martin Nievera, Smart's Kathy Carag, Smart's Annie Naval, Rachel Alejandro, Consul General Cookie Feria and son

Smart's Annie Naval and Kathy Carag with TFC Europe team during a dinner celebration after Kamustahan sa Madrid Show.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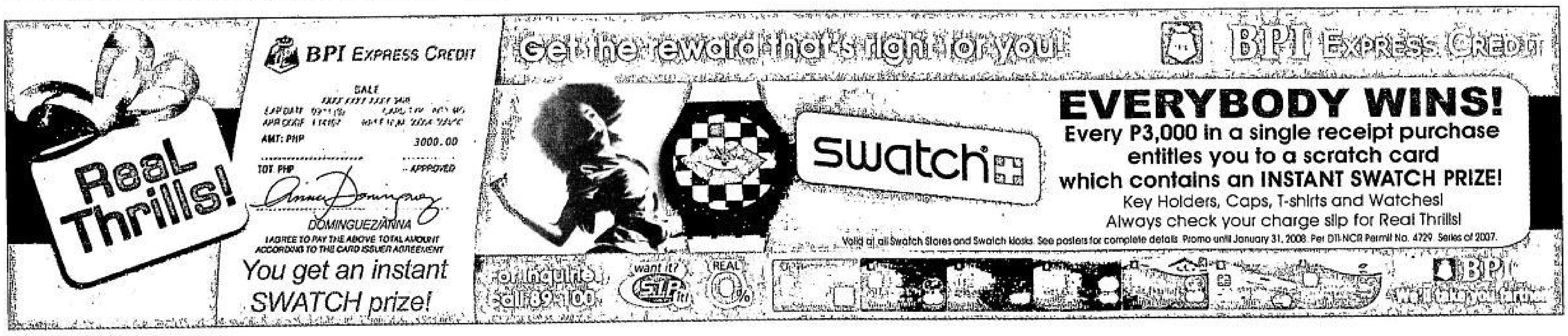
SATURDAY Special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REAL 0%
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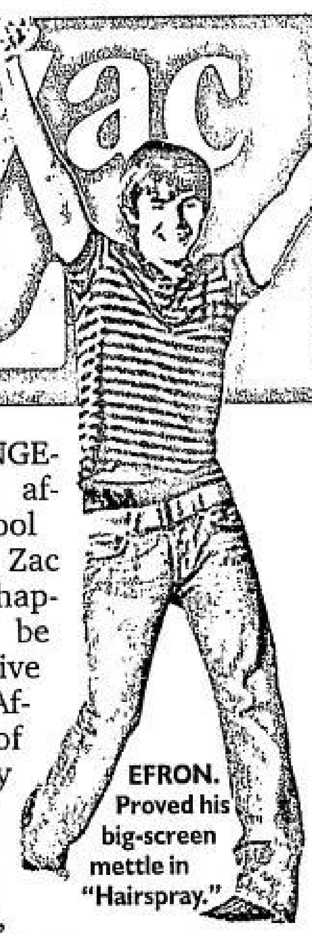
Zac Efron reprises role in 'High School Musical 3'



EFRON. Proved his big-screen mettle in "Hairspray."

LOS ANGELES—As after-school jobs go, Zac Efron's is shaping up to be more lucrative than most. After months of playing coy and holding out for approval of a final script, the Disney star has at long last signed on to reprise his tween heartthrob role in "High School Musical 3" for a $3 million payday, announces Entertainment Weekly.

The 20-year-old actor's allowance for the kid-friendly trilogy is more substantial than his fellow East Highers, and his signing completes the alignment of "HSM's" stars. Neither Efron nor Disney has commented on the seven-figure salary.

For weeks, it's been reported that Efron, along with girlfriend Vanessa Hudgens and Ashley Tisdale, were all seeking pay hikes for "HSM3," which, unlike its TV-movie predecessors, is targeting a theatrical release. All three stars have publicly maintained that they would be back for the latest installment, which director Kenny Ortega has said will focus on the gang's senior year and include the requisite prom scenes.

Negotiations

Efron was one of the last Wildcat holdouts to complete negotiations, apparently waiting for the right amount and the perfect screenplay. "If we agree on a final script, nothing will hold us back from doing it," he stated.

Earler, both Hudgens and Tisdale confirmed they had signed on for another round of song-and-dance shenanigans, though they declined to confirm reports of a hefty payday of their own. But, then again, they didn't deny them, either.

"We don't talk about our income, but Disney's great!," Tisdale told reporters at the American Music Awards. Cameras will roll on "HSM3" in March, with Corbin Bleu, Monique Coleman and Lucas Grabeel also due back.

Remake

News of Efron's big payday comes after he proved his big-screen mettle in this year's "Hairspray," and was attached to channel Kevin Bacon in a remake of "Footloose." He's also got a brand-new gig to work on before he resumes his "HSM" duties.

According to the Hollywood Reporter, Matthew Perry has signed on to join Efron in the "Big"-like comedy, "Seventeen." The film centers on an average father (Perry) who wakes up to find he's once again a teenager (Efron). In an effort to befriend his own children, he enrolls in the their high school—and passes himself off as a new student! *Reuters*

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Or you may give the recipient the freedom to choose by giving them the *Healthy Options* giftcards. *Available in 200, 500 and 1,000 Pesos*
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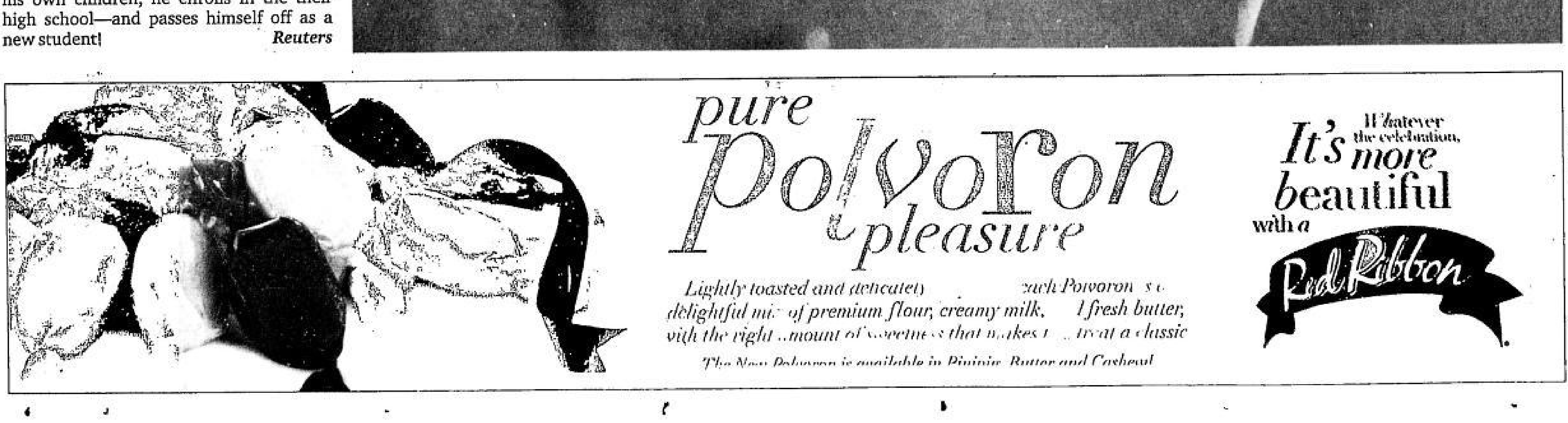
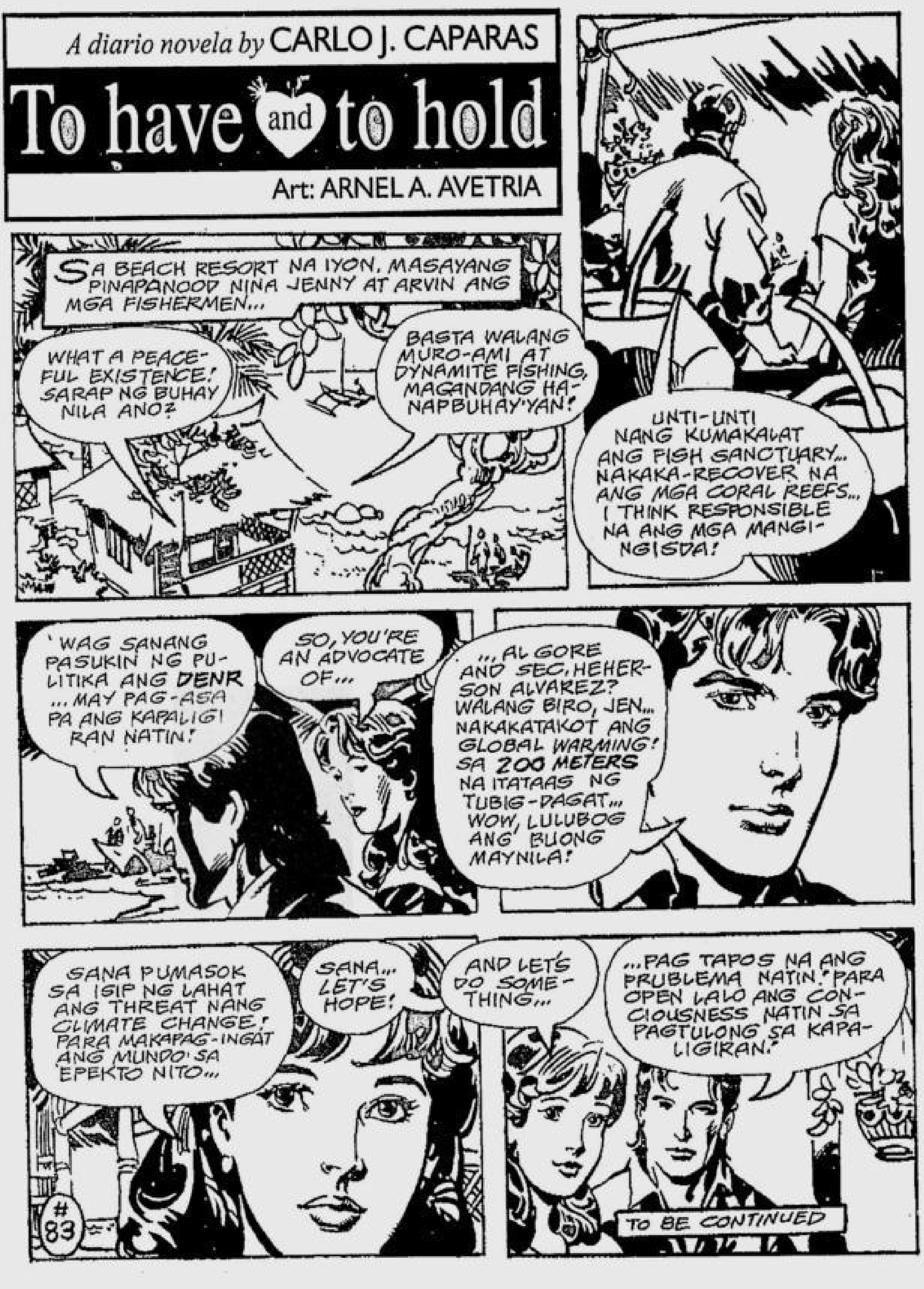

pure Polvoron pleasure
Lightly toasted and delicately [illegible] each Polvoron is a delightful mix of premium flour, creamy milk, and fresh butter, with the right amount of sweetness that makes the treat a classic
The New Polvoron is available in Pinipig, Butter and Cashew!
It's more beautiful with a Red Ribbon
Whatever the celebration,

A diario novela by CARLO J. CAPARAS

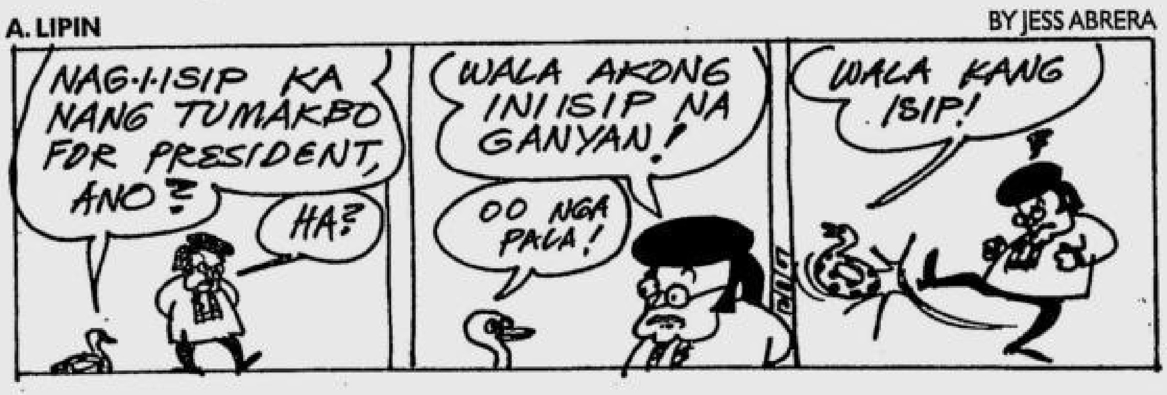
To have and to hold

Art: ARNEL A. AVETRIA


SA BEACH RESORT NA IYON, MASAYANG PINAPANOOD NINA JENNY AT ARVIN ANG MGA FISHERMEN...
WHAT A PEACEFUL EXISTENCE! SARAP NG BUHAY NILA ANO?
BASTA WALANG MURO-AMI AT DYNAMITE FISHING, MAGANDANG HANAPBUHAY 'YAN!
UNTI-UNTI NANG KUMAKALAT ANG FISH SANCTUARY... NAKAKA-RECOVER NA ANG MGA CORAL REEFS... I THINK RESPONSIBLE NA ANG MGA MANGINGISDA!
'WAG SANANG PASUKIN NG PULITIKA ANG DENR ... MAY PAG-ASA PA ANG KAPALIGIRAN NATIN!
SO, YOU'RE AN ADVOCATE OF...
...AL GORE AND SEC. HEHERSON ALVAREZ? WALANG BIRO, JEN... NAKAKATAKOT ANG GLOBAL WARMING! SA 200 METERS NA ITATAAS NG TUBIG-DAGAT... WOW, LULUBOG ANG BUONG MAYNILA!
SANA PUMASOK SA ISIP NG LAHAT ANG THREAT NANG CLIMATE CHANGE! PARA MAKAPAG-INGAT ANG MUNDO SA EPEKTO NITO...
SANA... LET'S HOPE!
AND LET'S DO SOMETHING...
...PAG TAPOS NA ANG PRUBLEMA NATIN! PARA OPEN LALO ANG CONCIOUSNESS NATIN SA PAGTULONG SA KAPALIGIRAN.
#83
TO BE CONTINUED

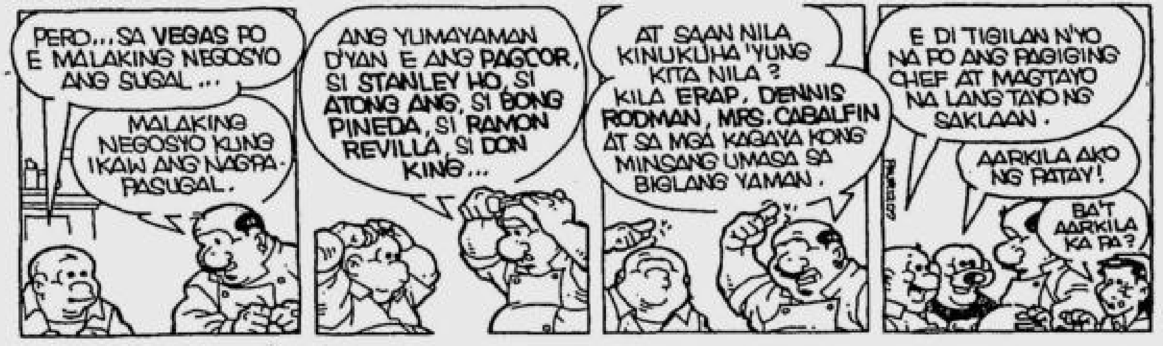
A. LIPIN

BY JESS ABRERA


NAG-I-ISIP KA NANG TUMAKBO FOR PRESIDENT, ANO?
HA?
WALA AKONG INIISIP NA GANYAN!
OO NGA PALA!
WALA KANG ISIP!

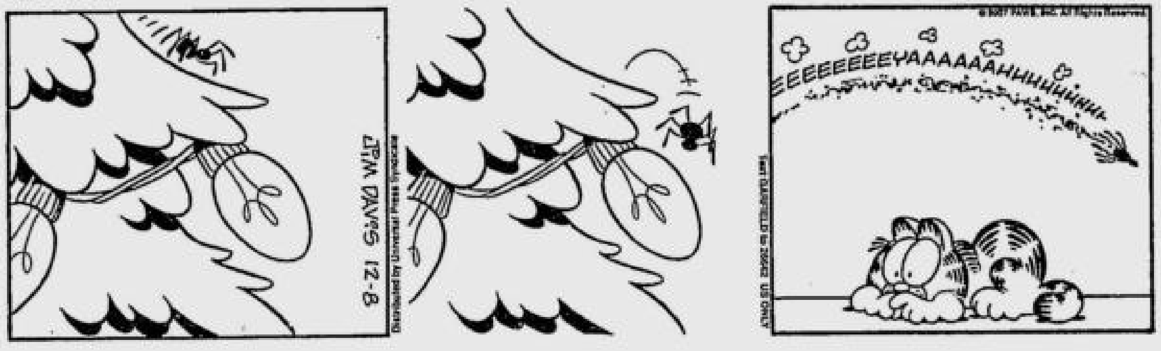
PUGAD BABOY

BY P.M. JUNIOR


PERO... SA VEGAS PO E MALAKING NEGOSYO ANG SUGAL...
MALAKING NEGOSYO KUNG IKAW ANG NAGPA-PASUGAL.
ANG YUMAYAMAN D'YAN E ANG PAGCOR, SI STANLEY HO, SI ATONG ANG, SI BONG PINEDA, SI RAMON REVILLA, SI DON KING...
AT SAAN NILA KINUKUHA 'YUNG KITA NILA? KILA ERAP, DENNIS RODMAN, MRS. CABALFIN AT SA MGA KAGAYA KONG MINSANG UMASA SA BIGLANG YAMAN.
E DI TIGILAN N'YO NA PO ANG PAGIGING CHEF AT MAGTAYO NA LANG TAYO NG SAKLAAN.
AARKILA AKO NG PATAY!
BA'T AARKILA KA PA?

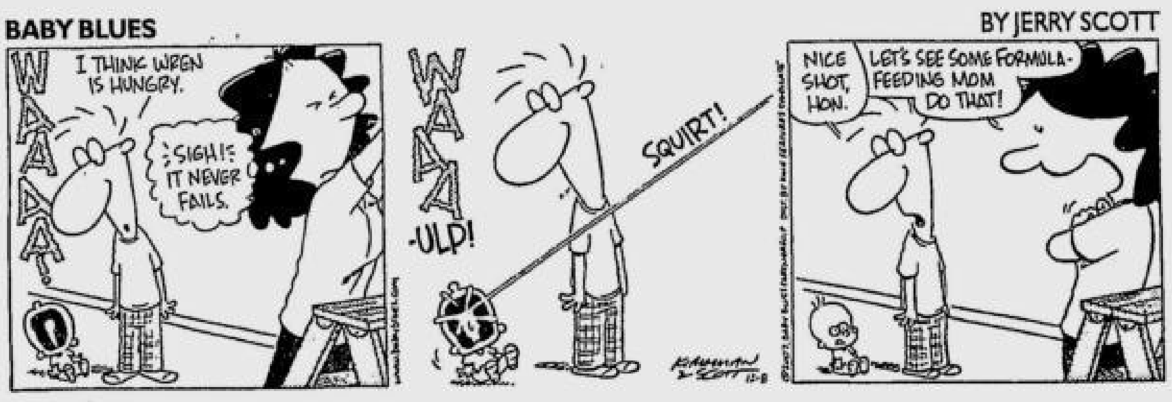
GARFIELD

BY JIM DAVIS


JIM DAVIS 12-8
EEEEEEEEYAAAAAAHHHHHHHH

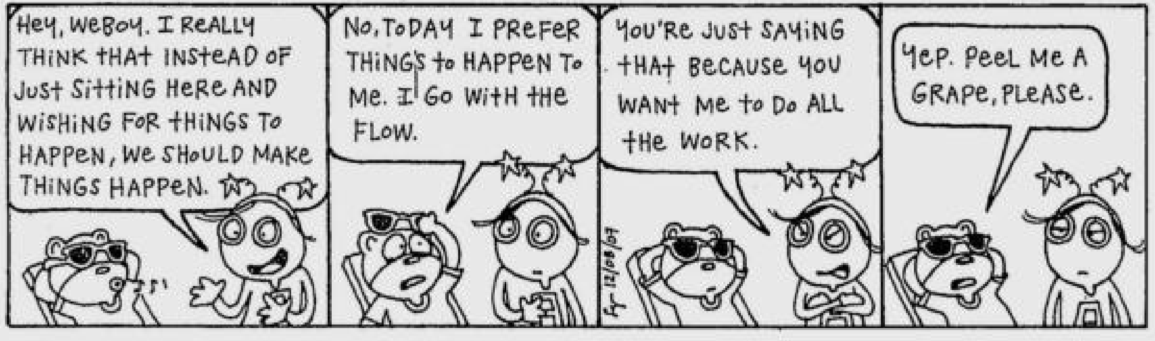
BABY BLUES

BY JERRY SCOTT


WAAAA
I THINK WREN IS HUNGRY.
SIGH! IT NEVER FAILS.
WAAA
SQUIRT!
-ULP!
NICE SHOT, HON.
LET'S SEE SOME FORMULA-FEEDING MOM DO THAT!

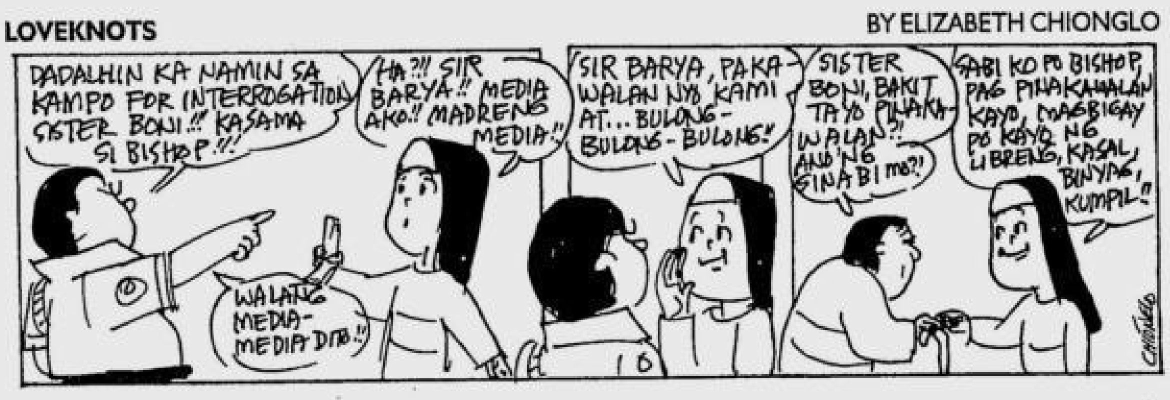
ATOMO AND WEBOY

BY LYRA GARCELLANO


Hey, WeBoy. I really think that instead of just sitting here and wishing for things to happen, we should make things happen.
No, today I prefer things to happen to me. I go with the flow.
You're just saying that because you want me to do all the work.
Yep. Peel me a grape, please.

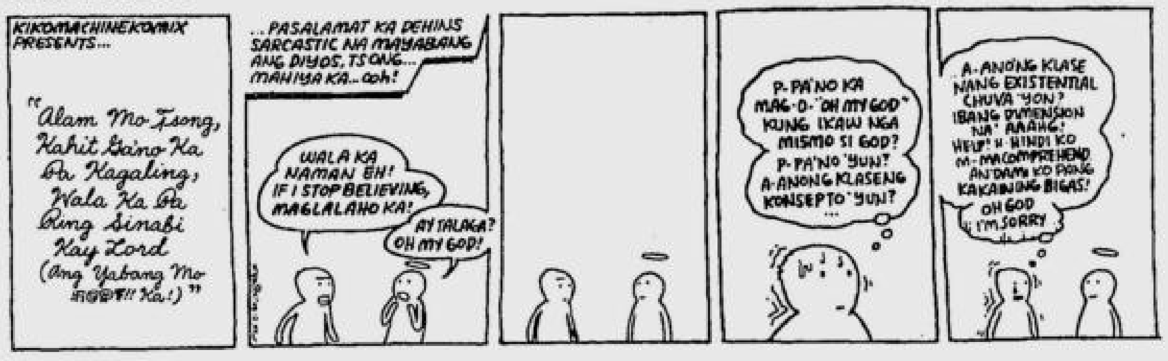
LOVEKNOTS

BY ELIZABETH CHIONGLO


DADALHIN KA NAMIN SA KAMPO FOR INTERROGATION SISTER BONI!! KASAMA SI BISHOP!!
HA?!! SIR BARYA!! MEDIA AKO!! MADRENG MEDIA!!
WALANG MEDIA-MEDIA DITO!!
SIR BARYA, PAKAWALAN NYO KAMI AT... BULONG-BULONG-BULONG!!
SISTER BONI, BAKIT TAYO PINAKAWALAN!? ANO'NG SINABI MO?!
SABI KO PO BISHOP, PAG PINAKAWALAN KAYO, MAGBIGAY PO KAYO NG LIBRENG KASAL, BINYAG, KUMPIL!!

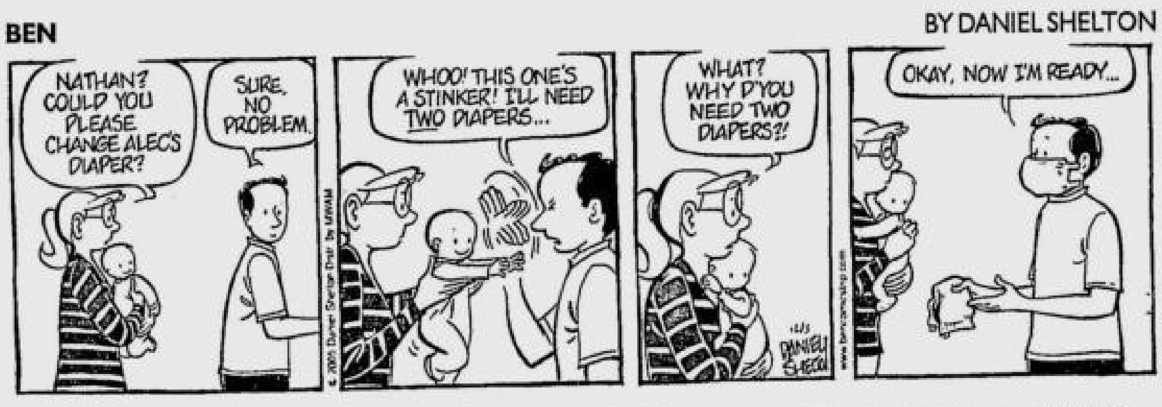
KIKO MACHINE

BY MANIX ABRERA

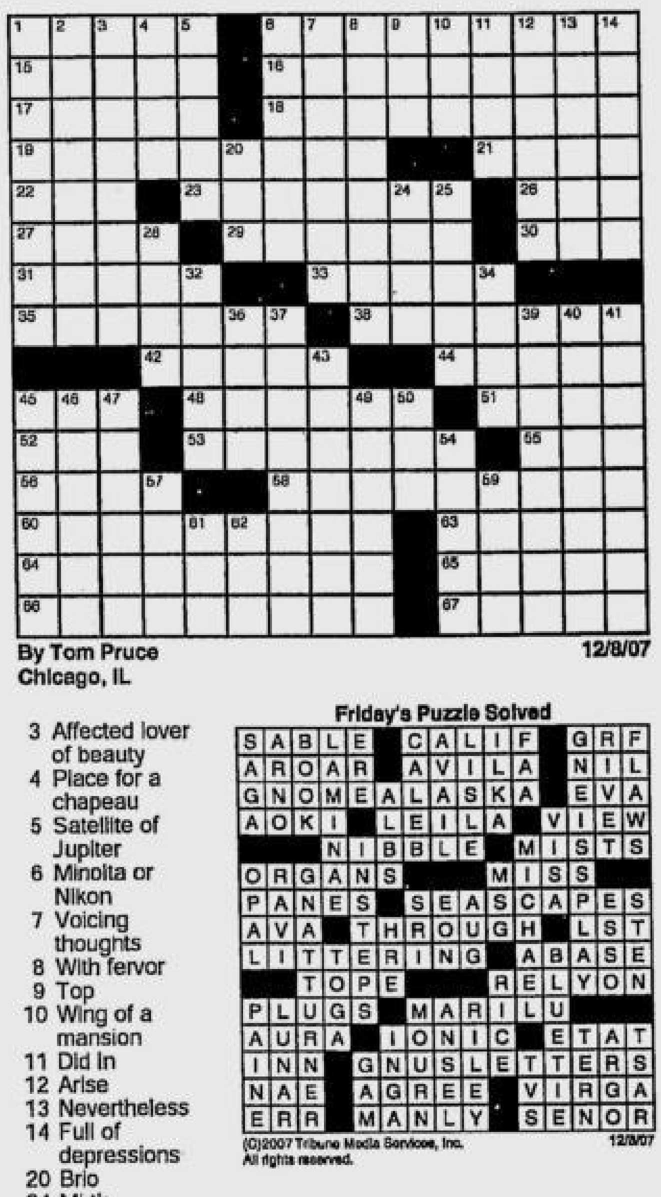

KIKOMACHINEKOMIX PRESENTS...
"Alam Mo Tsong, Kahit Gaano Ka Pa Kagaling, Wala Ka Pa Ring Sinabi Kay Lord (Ang Yabang Mo #@$*!! Ka!)"
...PASALAMAT KA DEHINS SARCASTIC NA MAYABANG ANG DIYOS, TSONG... MAHIYA KA...ooh!
WALA KA NAMAN EH! IF I STOP BELIEVING, MAGLALAHO KA!
AY TALAGA? OH MY GOD!
P-PA'NO KA MAG-O-"OH MY GOD" KUNG IKAW NGA MISMO SI GOD? P-PA'NO 'YUN? A-ANONG KLASENG KONSEPTO 'YUN? ...
A-ANONG KLASE NANG EXISTENTIAL CHUVA 'YON? IBANG DIMENSION NA! AAHG! HELP! H-HINDI KO M-MACOMPREHEND AN DAMI KO PANG KAKAINING BIGAS!
OH GOD I'M SORRY

BEN

BY DANIEL SHELTON


NATHAN? COULD YOU PLEASE CHANGE ALEC'S DIAPER?
SURE. NO PROBLEM.
WHOO! THIS ONE'S A STINKER! I'LL NEED TWO DIAPERS...
WHAT? WHY D'YOU NEED TWO DIAPERS?!
OKAY, NOW I'M READY...

DAILY CROSSWORD



By Tom Pruce
Chicago, IL

12/8/07

ACROSS
1 Fall off in intensity
6 Came together to form one whole
15 Fisherman's basket
16 Springtime romance
17 "__ la vista, baby!"
18 Go-betweens
19 Come between
21 Took off
22 Old English letter
23 Exposures for drying
26 Manipulate
27 Contends
29 The Mick
30 Vessel for seeds
31 Kefauver of politics
33 Collect bit by bit
35 Defeat decisively
38 Capital of Armenia
42 Uproar
44 End of a steal, often
45 Blockhead
48 Distress call
51 Swan lady
52 Sultry singer Peggy
53 Small cutter
55 Humorist
56 Play components
58 Minister's purview
60 Under one's breath
63 Spring harbinger
64 Short trousers
65 Soothing ointment
66 Agility
67 Cornered in branches

DOWN
1 Reaches
2 Wield
3 Affected lover of beauty
4 Place for a chapeau
5 Satellite of Jupiter
6 Minolta or Nikon
7 Voicing thoughts
8 With fervor
9 Top
10 Wing of a mansion
11 Did in
12 Arise
13 Nevertheless
14 Full of depressions
20 Brio
24 Mirth
25 Chicago skyscraper
28 Ego
32 Watery ice
34 Girlfriend of Dudley Do-Right
36 Reliquary
37 Johnnycake
39 Able to be seen
40 Altering agent
41 Made tidy
43 Edits
45 Site of the Iditarod
46 Place position
47 Park bench
49 Value
50 Welcoming rug
54 Pessimistic expectation
57 Part of a process
59 Lion's comment
61 Make one's pick
62 Delivery vehicle

Friday's Puzzle Solved

S	A	B	L	E	■	C	A	L	I	F	■	G	R	F
A	R	O	A	R	■	A	V	I	L	A	■	N	I	L
G	N	O	M	E	A	L	A	S	K	A	■	E	V	A
A	O	K	I	■	L	E	I	L	A	■	V	I	E	W
■	■	■	N	I	B	B	L	E	■	M	I	S	T	S
O	R	G	A	N	S	■	■	■	M	I	S	S	■	■
P	A	N	E	S	■	S	E	A	S	C	A	P	E	S
A	V	A	■	T	H	R	O	U	G	H	■	L	S	T
L	I	T	T	E	R	I	N	G	■	A	B	A	S	E
■	■	T	O	P	E	■	■	■	R	E	L	Y	O	N
P	L	U	G	S	■	M	A	R	I	L	U	■	■	■
A	U	R	A	■	I	O	N	I	C	■	E	T	A	T
I	N	N	■	G	N	U	S	L	E	T	T	E	R	S
N	A	E	■	A	G	R	E	E	■	V	I	R	G	A
E	R	R	■	M	A	N	L	Y	■	S	E	N	O	R

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12/8/07

HOROSCOPE

YOU BORN TODAY: Many of you can accumulate wealth simply because you're so focused on what you're doing that you give it your all. You have lots of energy! You worked very hard, and you don't give up. You're fascinated by characters and exciting people. You have an interesting year ahead. Quite likely, you'll face an important choice. Choose wisely.

Birthdate of: Teri Hatcher, actress; Dominic Monaghan, actor; David Carradine, actor.

ARIES (March 21 to April 19): You can get an amazing amount done at home today. You're willing to work hard and long to make things the way you want them to be.

TAURUS (April 20 to May 20): You can apply your mind to any routine task today. Focus on detail-oriented work that requires attention and concentration. You will do it well.

GEMINI (May 21 to 20): You're willing to work very hard for what you earn today. Some of you are working equally as hard to spend it wisely so that you have a long-term benefit in the future.

CANCER (June 21 to July 22): You can work long, hard hours today. You have perseverance and endurance. You're more concerned with the success of future goals than you are with what is happening today.

LEO (July 23 to Aug. 22): Group activities will be successful today. This is a great day for sports or practice, because you're willing to put out the energy to learn something.

VIRGO (Aug. 23 to Sept. 22): You're willing to work on behalf of others today. It's easy to put their needs before your own. Remember: What goes around comes around.

LIBRA (Sept. 23 to Oct. 22): You have the patience and necessary focus and concentration to do your job. You're willing to get along with less today in order to make it easier in the future.

SCORPIO (Oct. 23 to Nov. 21): This is an excellent day for study or anything connected with publishing, the media, education, medicine and the law. You're willing to put out whatever it takes to get the job done.

SAGITTARIUS (Nov. 22 to Dec. 21): You might work on behalf of others today or work to protect your share of something. Your concerns are less about today and more about the good of your future.

CAPRICORN (Dec. 22 to Jan. 19): If you join forces with someone else today you might achieve a lot. Others will appreciate your steady, unwavering effort. You're working for tomorrow.

AQUARIUS (Jan. 20 to Feb. 18): You can get a tremendous amount done at work today. Choose jobs that you've been putting off because they're boring or too routine. You'll do them easily today!

PISCES (Feb. 19 to March 20): Your greatest benefits today come from child-related work. If you're learning to play an instrument or perfecting your craft in any way, this is a good day to practice.

CONCEPTIS SU DOKU

Conceptis SudoKu

By Dave Green

	3		8		5			
	2		9				8	5
		9				7		
6							3	2
				3				
4	8							1
		7				4		
9	1				4		6	
			1		2		9	

Difficulty Level ★★★★

12/08

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HOW TO PLAY SU DOKU

Fill the grid so that every column, every row and every 3x3 box contains the digits 1 to 9.
Tips and program at www.sudoku.com

Answer to previous puzzle

7	9	4	1	2	5	6	8	3
5	3	2	7	8	6	4	1	9
1	8	6	3	4	9	5	2	7
8	7	5	9	3	4	1	6	2
9	4	1	8	6	2	7	3	5
6	2	3	5	1	7	9	4	8
2	6	7	4	5	8	3	9	1
4	1	9	2	7	3	8	5	6
3	5	8	6	9	1	2	7	4

Difficulty Level ★★★★ 12/07

Alix wins some, loses some in back-to-back dramatic features

By Rito P. Asilo

CALZADO AND CHU. Topbill interracial love story in "Batanes."

ADOLF ALIX JR., THE soft-spoken director of acclaimed Cinemalaya features, "Donsol" and "Kadin," is arguably the local movie industry's most prolific director these days.

Impressively, just one week after his cautionary drama, "Tambolista," was shown at the Cinema One film festival, two of Adolf's latest projects, "Batanes" (which he codirects with Ignite's Dave Hukom) and "Nars," are being shown in theaters this week—with varying degrees of success.

"Batanes" is an interracial love story that uses the hills and seas of the picturesque northern Philippine town as a fitting backdrop for Alix and Hukom's cinematic paean to romance:

City girl

After independent-minded city girl, Pam (played by Iza Calzado), meets small-town boy, Rico (the promising Joem Bascon), she thought she had found her fairy tale-like happy ending.

She then leaves her urban surroundings behind and relocates with Rico in Batanes—where her hubby drowns in the sea after an epileptic attack!

One year after the tragedy, however, the grieving Pam finally finds a reason to move on when she runs into the body of Kao (F4's Ken Chu), a Taiwanese fisherman, on a beach in Batanes after a storm.

Despite the language barrier, Pam and Kao become fast friends, and they soon find solace and comfort in each other's loneliness and grief. Then, despite strong objections from Rico's family, the star-crossed pair discovers love again.

The film takes full advantage of Batanes' sprawling landscape. For this alone, the movie shouldn't be missed. The charismatic Calzado (who's good even in bad indies, like the recent "Mona") carries the movie on her able shoulders, with strong support from the film's great-looking cast. Even when scenes teeter in implausible dramatic mush, she consistently vivifies Pam's journey.

Bascon is a major acting find with a striking screen presence—although he tends to smile his way through his scenes too much.

Chu, however, isn't so successful. The handsome international star—who sports a spiffy haircut and hip earrings—has obviously gained some unwanted pounds since appearing in 2001's "Meteor Garden" and 2003's "Sky of Love." The charisma is there, but the acting chops, unfortunately, aren't.

Our minor quibble about the film involves how Kao is treated by the locals, who are surprisingly unwelcoming after he ends up wounded and discombobulated in the shores of Batanes—which we found inconsiderate, malicious and unfriendly (he was threatened with arrest and deportation). Where has the vaunted Filipino hospitality gone?

In **"Nars,"** Alix follows a group of nursing students on their last two terms in school—a feisty bunch played by Jennylyn Mercado, Jodi Sta. Maria, "Pinoy Big Brother's" Jon Avila, Coco Martin and Agot Isidro, who's refreshingly sympathetic as a doctor who ends up taking a nursing course to fast-track her dream of leaving the country.

The well-intentioned film attempts to tackle a lot of relevant issues, but it is mired by the confounding narrative clutter. And it doesn't help that Mercado resorts to the *kikay* shtick that has made her a box-office darling in her movies with Mark Herras. The endearing energy is there, but without an internal life, that kind of energy doesn't really amount to much.

Improbable

A possible but improbable narrative sidebar features the doctor-turned-nursing student failing the nursing board exam—which is a curious choice in moving the exposition.

In one scene, for instance, when an innocent bystander is hit by a stray bullet, the nursing students around tried to revive the patient—by merely checking the patient's pulse rate! Hasn't anybody heard of CPR? No wonder Isidro's character failed the board exams.

Obviously, touchy issues such as these require greater care, research—and sensitivity.

MERCADO. Plays a student in "Nars."

Finding protection

LOTUS POND

R. Valencia and S. Bismark

LAST WEEK, WE WERE JOLTED BY an earthquake that seemed to last longer than it actually did. People ran out of buildings, children cried for their mothers, and some classes were called off.

As it became apparent that the earthquake was only going to be mild, I reflected on how precarious our situation is in this world. An initially perfect day could end in disaster—that could change our lives forever! It's difficult to feel completely secure.

Survival skills

Disaster-preparedness is crucial and practical in a country prone to disaster. It doesn't hurt to learn survival skills and techniques like First Aid, search and rescue operations, rappelling, and other emergency procedures.

However, there are other "disasters" we can't prepare for: Business ventures can fail, friends can turn their backs on us, and a beloved spouse can be unfaithful. How do we find security in an easily changing world? What do we do when we come face to face with our biggest fears?

Just remember God's promise of protection. Whatever it is, it can't be bigger than God! His jurisdiction is all-encompassing—and nothing or no one is more powerful than He, because God is the Supreme Controller! His love will protect us in our time of need.

So don't worry. There's no need to be scared of the present or the future. We don't need to fear death or rebirth. Whatever the situation, remember that true protection comes from our Lord—He won't put us in harm's way!

Fusion of rock concert . . .

From page 14

Fuente. "Hotbabes Gone Wild" is available on DVD and VCD.

'Alien vs. Predator 2'

Colin and Greg Strause's "Alien vs. Predator 2" starts when the Predator scout ship crash-lands, the Alien on board escape, and they infect a town. The town's inhabitants are caught in the middle of the ultimate face-off between the two monster forces, even as the government bombs the town to prevent the deadly infection from spreading.

Hit compilations reunite rock groups

Rob Thomas and the guys of Matchbox Twenty reunite in the hits collection, "Exile on Mainstream," the arena-rock group's first album since Thomas went solo in 2005. Featuring a bolder and more confident sound, the boys' hefty, 17-track album includes hits like "How Far We've Come," "3 AM," "Unwell" and "Real World."

Also on the comeback trail are adult-alternative rockers, The Goo Goo Dolls, with the release of "Greatest Hits, Volume One: The Singles," featuring a 14-song lineup that includes "Iris," "Let Love In," "Slide," a remix of "Feel the Silence," and a new version of "Name."

"BIG LOVE." Offbeat contemporary drama is telecast every Monday on HBO.

GOO GOO DOLLS. Release greatest-hits album.

'Big Love'

A new episode of "Big Love" will premiere on HBO every Monday at 11 p.m. The offbeat contemporary drama topbills Chloe Sevigny, Bruce Dern and Bill Paxton.

Ilya Rashkovskiy

Tonight at the Philamlife Theater, Russian pianist Ilya Rashkovskiy will perform Chopin's Seven Waltzes, Scriabin's Valse, Op. 38 B major, Ravel's La Valse and Valses Nobles Sentimentales, Liszt's Soirees de Vienne: Valse-Caprice No. 6 and Mephisto Waltz. Call (02) 400-7023.

'Pasko ng Komiks'

At 9 a.m. on Dec. 11, the "Pasko ng Komiks" symposium at UP Diliman's Pulungang Claro M. Recto discusses the relevance of *komiks* in contemporary Filipino life. There will also be a *komiks* exhibit at Galleries 1 and 2 of Bulwagang Rizal.

Anmum™
Lacta

Specially formulated for breastfeeding moms

Mothers are recommended to drink 2 glasses of Anmum Lacta everyday to support their increased nutritional needs during breastfeeding.

ANMUM LACTA is specially formulated to help breastfeeding mothers meet their Recommended Energy and Nutrient Intake (RENI). A product of Fonterra Brands Philippines, ANMUM LACTA helps in maintaining the nutritional composition of breast milk while replenishing maternal stores during the post-natal period. ANMUM LACTA is a good source of Vitamins B1, B2, B3, B12, Folate, Calcium, Iron, and Vitamin A. It also contains Sialic Acid (SA) and Essential Fatty Acids (EFA), precursors of DHA and AA, which are important nutrients for your baby's brain development.

BREASTFEEDING
BEST for BABY
BEST for MOMMY

Getting ready for breastfeeding

By Dr. Ma. Carmen Hernandez-Quevedo, FPOGS
FEU-NRMF Medical Center

A pregnant or breastfeeding mother has to maintain a healthy diet to be able to provide enough nutrition to her baby and to herself. This will help her produce quality breast milk that will nourish her child.

Breastfeeding is a once in a lifetime experience a mother can share with her child. And although most mothers are aware of its benefits, the attrition rate among breastfeeding mothers remains high.

This is usually due to lack of commitment on the part of the mother. Breastfeeding poses several challenges, and if the mother is not aware of these, her resolve to provide her baby with the best source of nourishment may weaken. A breastfeeding mom should be physically and emotionally ready for the experience. This is especially true for first-time mothers.

Physical preparation should start with proper nutrition. A pregnant or breastfeeding woman is not advised to go on a slimming diet. She has to maintain a healthy diet to be able to give enough nutrition for her baby as well as for her own reserves. This will help her produce quality breast milk that will nourish her child. There is no need to worry about not losing extra weight because breastfeeding makes losing weight easier and faster.

To make sure mothers get the right nutrient concentration and quality, a maternal milk supplement especially formulated for breastfeeding women is highly recommended. This is to ensure that they get all the essential nutrients they need to produce enough, high quality breast milk.

Emotional preparation is also important among breastfeeding mothers. At this stage, she needs the support of her family, especially her husband's. One of the reasons why women sometimes give up breastfeeding is their spouse's indifference to it or lack of support. At the early stages of breastfeeding, husbands should be supportive and helpful. Other family members can help by taking care of other household responsibilities.

Mothers who have decided to breastfeed should do so as soon as the baby is born. This is the key to ensure the success of breastfeeding. Latching the baby as soon as possible after the delivery helps the mother produce and express milk, because breastfeeding essentially follows the law of supply and demand.

Finally, getting enough information is the best way for would-be mothers to ready themselves for breastfeeding. They should read reference books, surf the Net or get tips from fellow moms who have successfully breastfed. This would guide them on the proper ways of breastfeeding and enlighten them on old myths about the practice.

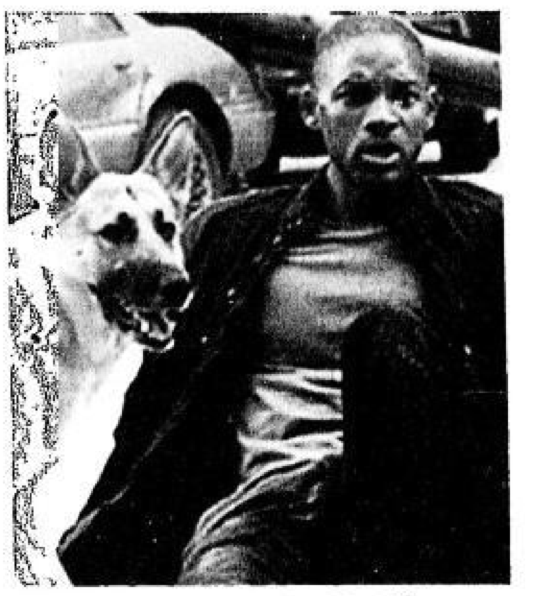
Usually, women who say they can't breastfeed because they don't have enough breast milk, or because they have inverted nipples just weren't prepared for it or didn't have enough information about breastfeeding. They just need proper instruction on how to breastfeed properly.

To sum it up, a new mom can prepare for successful lactation by maintaining a healthy diet, keeping herself informed on the subject and making sure she is surrounded by supportive family and friends. All these will undoubtedly help strengthen her commitment and ensure a successful breastfeeding experience for her and her baby.

Fusion of rock concert and tattoo competition

MONTAGE

TRIBAL GEAR PRESENTS "DUTDUTAN '07," a fusion of rock concert and tattoo competition, at the Philippine Trade and Training Center Hall B on Dec. 15. The Philippine Tattoo Artists Guild headed by president Ricky Sta. Ana has whipped up a show featuring fave bands like the Beatmatics, Concrete Sam, Cosmic Love, D-Coy, Greyhoundz, Kadanngyan, Kamikazee, Niniskirt, Queso, Sinag, Sinosikat, Slapshock, Urbandub and Valley of Chrome. Tickets are available at the gate and at Skinworkz Tattoo and Body Piercing Shop (D19, Cartimar Arcade, Pasay City). Call 845-5001.



SMITH. Plays a scientist in sci-fi thriller.

'I Am Legend'

Will Smith's latest starrer, "I Am Legend," casts him as a brilliant scientist who finds himself the "only" survivor of a deadly, man-made virus. In time, however, he discovers that he is not alone—mutant victims of the plague lurk in the shadows, waiting for him to make a fatal mistake. Francis Lawrence ("Constantine") directs.

'Sali na Kami'

COJUANGCO-JAWORSKI. Will participate in Anak TV's special forum.

The RPN, IBC and NBN TV networks have coproduced a TV special, "Sali na Kami," in collaboration with Anak TV, to mark the International Children's Day of Broadcasting tomorrow. The special, which will be telecast at 6 p.m., stresses the importance of children in national and daily affairs. It features Mike Enriquez, Mikee Cojuangco-Jaworski, Ricky Davao and Tintin Bersola-Babao, plus 24 gifted students from P. Bernardo and Aurora Quezon Elementary Shcools, Multiple Intelligence International School and Benedictine International School.

The TV forum delves into the thoughts and views of youth on the environment, technology, education and child discipline. Supporters include the National Council for Children's Television, MTRCB, Goldilocks and Columbia's.

'Winston in Concert'

From 1 p.m. to 1 a.m. on Dec. 14, music takes center stage at Fontera Verde, Julia Vargas, Ortigas, Pasig City for "Winston in Concert: The 5th Musicblast." There will be exhibits, music lessons, a sale of music-related products, and topnotch entertainment from the Bamboo, Kjwan, Urbandub, Chicosci and Imago bands. Only for persons 18 years old and above.

Christmas at the Pen

The 24th Christmas Concert at the Pen will be held at 5 p.m. today, featuring the Philippine Philharmonic Orchestra, The CompanY and the UP Concert Chorus. Major sponsors are The Peninsula Manila and Stores Specialists Inc., purveyor of famous American and European designer labels in the Philippines.

CN Awards of Excellence

Cartoon Network has chosen the winners of its Awards of Excellence for 2007: For singing, Deanne May G. Igaya of Torres High School. For dancing, Campus Crew of Gen. Pio del Pilar National High School. In the Wild Card category, Faith S. Lagrimas of Makati Elementary School emerged victorious.

Movies on TV

On HBO today at 3 p.m., "The Bodyguard." Tomorrow at 7 a.m., "Ordinary People." Dec. 10 at 10 a.m., "Who's Harry Crumb?" Dec. 11 at 9 p.m., "Mrs. Harris." Dec. 12 at 9 p.m., "Babe: Pig in the City." Dec. 13 at 4:30 p.m., "Excalibur." Dec. 14 at 1 p.m., "Back to the Future 3."

On Cinemax today at 1 p.m., "The Manchurian Candidate." Tomorrow at 7 p.m., "The Lost Boys." Dec. 10 at 5 p.m., "Dog Day Afternoon." Dec. 11 at 11 a.m., "Funny Face." Dec. 12 at 3 p.m., "Tobruk." Dec. 13 at 7 a.m., "Anzio." Dec. 14 at 7 p.m., "The Temp."

Cyberpoint launch

Rhian Ramos, Mart Escudero and Chris Padilla were the special guests during the grand launch of Cyberpoint last Nov. 27 at Starmall Edsa. Cyberpoint sells the latest gadgets, like digicams, MP3 and MP4 players, iPods and DVD players, at reasonable prices.

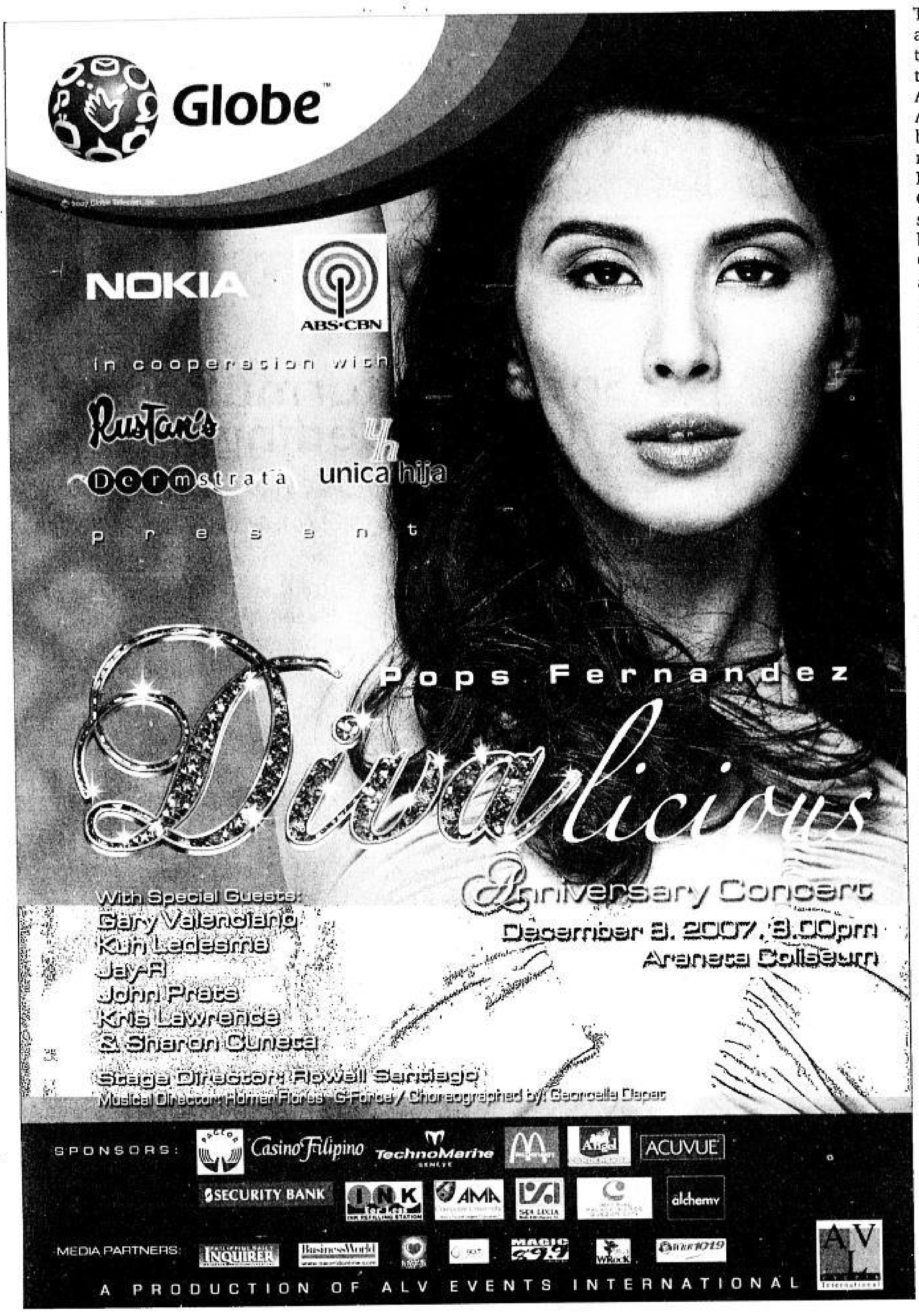
DANIEGA. Appears in sexy video.

Hotbabes and Mo

Popular deejay Mo Twister takes his controversial "Forbidden Questions" to the next level with the new video, "Hotbabes Gone Wild with Mo Twister." He challenges each of the Babes to a sizzling "Truth and Bare" session and presents them with a series of hot challenges.

The Hotbabes featured include Maui Taylor, Katya Santos, Jennifer Lee, Gwen Garci, Myles Hernandez, Hazel Cabrera, Vanessa Khain, Carla Samonte, Sachie Sanders, Mara Daniega and Maricar dela

FUSION/13



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THE KINGDOM	ONE MORE CHANCE	PASUKOB	HITMAN	ENCHANTED
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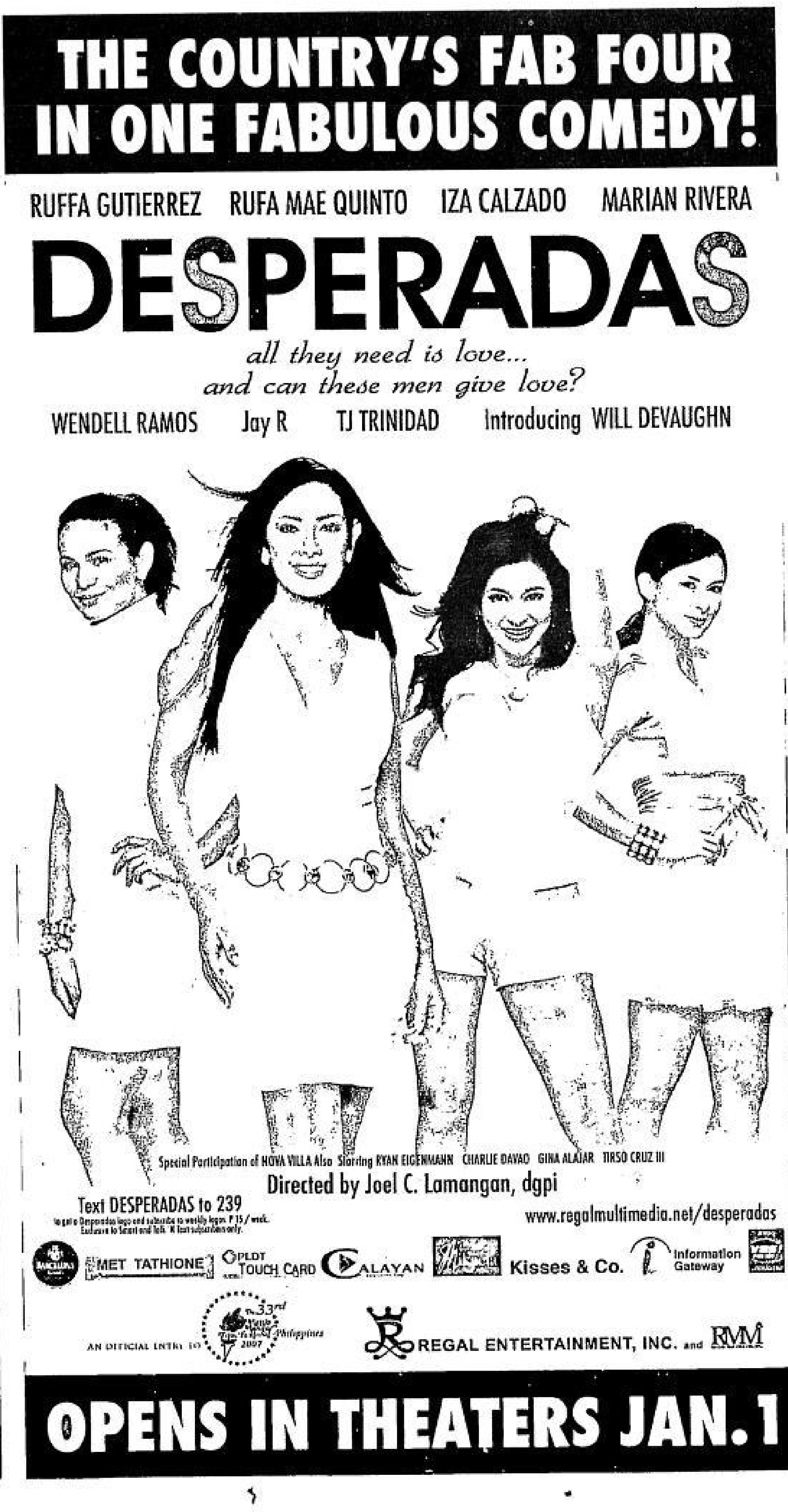

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Mortensen breathes life into Cronenberg's Oscar-worthy musings

By Rito P. Asilo

"Eastern Promises"

D: David Cronenberg
S: Viggo Mortensen, Naomi Watts, Armin Mueller Stahl

IF YOU'RE FAMILIAR WITH David Cronenberg's cinematic oeuvre, you know how adept the 64-year-old Canadian filmmaker is at shocking, confusing, affecting or impressing viewers. The stories and themes that he chooses are as deeply cerebral as they are engagingly eclectic.

For their no-holds-barred realistic execution and immediacy, perhaps you'll even find the jarring images Cronenberg conjures up on the screen oddly entertaining and appropriate. Consider these titles: 1988's "Dead Ringers," 1996's "Crash," 2002's "Spider" and his most "mainstream" project yet, 2005's "A History of Violence"—you either love or hate them! "Eastern Promises," one of the year's best films, is no exception.

Cronenberg's riveting morality play follows the story of mysterious Russian-born driver, Nikolai Lizhin (Viggo Mortensen), as it intersects with the life of midwife, Anna Khitrova (Naomi Watts), after the latter finds the diary of 14-year-old Tatiana—who dies during childbirth.

The dead teenager's journal, with text written in Russian, is Anna's only clue to the baby's lineage, and the reason behind Tatiana's untimely demise!

The lonely midwife's compassion and increasing curiosity lead her to Nikolai, who works for Vory V Zakone, a Russian brotherhood of mobsters headed by the charming Semyon (Armin Mueller Stahl) and his mentally unstable and closeted-gay son, Kirill (Vincent Cassel).

In no time, as Anna fends off the handsome driver's advances, she realizes that the erring father and son hold the key to the circumstances behind Tatiana's mysterious death! When Anna's Russian-raised uncle translates Tatiana's diary, its contents consequently put Anna in harm's way! But, where does Nikolai stand in all this?

Once again, Cronenberg weaves his disturbing tale with uncompromising vision. He peppers his story with characters whose motivations are made ambiguous by their unfulfilled longings and amorality. Violence, as with the director's previous films, is a gut-wrenching fixture, but it's never gratuitous.

Showing as much commitment and conviction as Cronenberg is lead actor Mortensen, who masterfully captures the soul of the mysterious protagonist. He holds the film together as he paces an outstanding cast (Watts, Mueller Stahl and the scary Cassel). They breathe life into the director's cerebral musings, and give their characters a sense of purpose.

Mortensen, who once figured in a controversial nude scene (in Sean Penn's 1991 directorial debut, "Indian Runner"), shows some skin again in a protracted and bloody action sequence. Indeed, when Cronenberg and Mortensen collaborate, they really leave no stone unturned—and more!

In "Eastern Promises," as the filmmaker challenges mainstream cinema's storytelling conventions, he also examines the trend of migration as a way to alleviate poverty—an increasingly disturbing social concern that he utilizes as a backdrop to question his viewers' moral convictions.

By vivifying his unique perspective on things, Cronenberg's taut drama spins a relevant yarn that convinces his audience to look at life in a different light—and demonstrates why it deserves the Oscar buzz that it's getting!

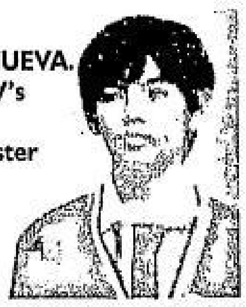
Children find their voice in media

By Mag Cruz Hatol

IN MANY DEVELOPING countries, citizens under age 18 constitute half the population. It is regrettable, therefore, that meager resources are earmarked for them. Children are usually given a token role in governance—they play a negligible role in politics, and their voice is barely audible in media.

Scenario

It was amid this forlorn scenario that Unicef cooked up the International Children's Day of Broadcasting (ICDB) about a decade ago, in an attempt to underscore the significant role that children play in national and global affairs.



VILLANUEVA. Anak TV's Batang Brodkaster winner.

ICDB soon evolved as a tool to explain and propagate the tenets of the Convention on the Rights of the Child. For a civilization that pins its hopes on the youth, it's necessary to allow them greater

CHILDREN/ J3

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THE KINGDOM R13 12:30,2:55,5;20, 7:45,10:10	EASTERN PROMISES R13 1:10,3:25,5:40, 7:55,10:10	THE GOLDEN COMPASS PG13 12:30,3:00,5;30, 8:00,10:30

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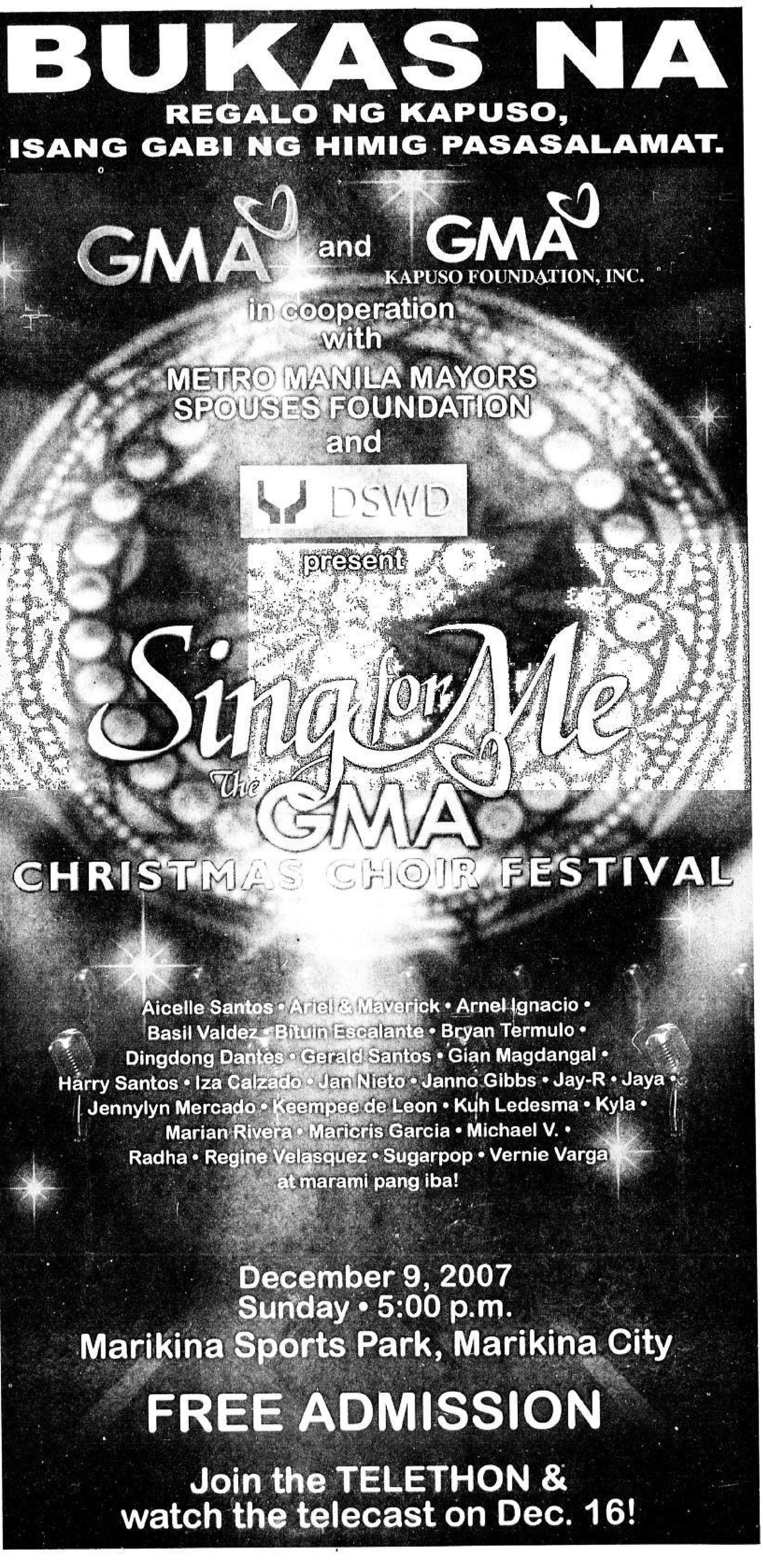

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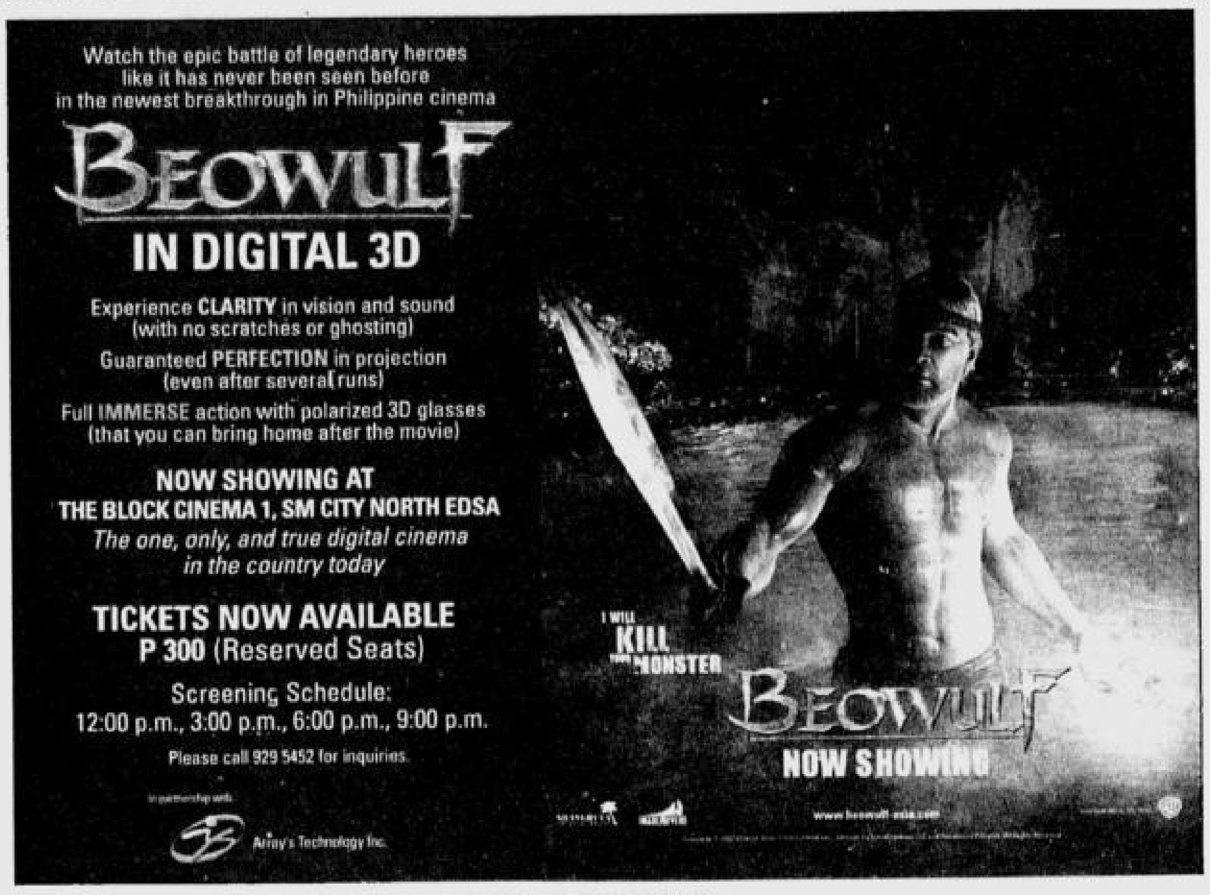

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4 PASUKOB
5 ONE MORE CHANCE
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12 ENCHANTED

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3 PASUKOB
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6 PASUKOB

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3 THE GOLDEN COMPASS
4 THE NANNY DIARIES
5 ONE MORE CHANCE
6 30 DAYS OF NIGHT
7 PASUKOB
8 BATANES

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3 LIONS FOR LAMBS
4 PASUKOB

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2 THE GOLDEN COMPASS
4:30 7:00 9:30

3 indieSine: KONTRA AGOS

4 EASTERN PROMISES
1:00 3:10 5:20 7:30 9:40

5 PASUKOB

6 THE GOLDEN COMPASS
12:00 2:30 5:00 7:30 10:00

7 ENCHANTED 11:30 1:45
THE KINGDOM 4:00 6:15

8 BATANES
1:00 3:15 5:30 7:45 10:00

9 ONE MORE CHANCE
12:30 2:50 5:10 7:30 9:50

10 HITMAN 12:40 2:40
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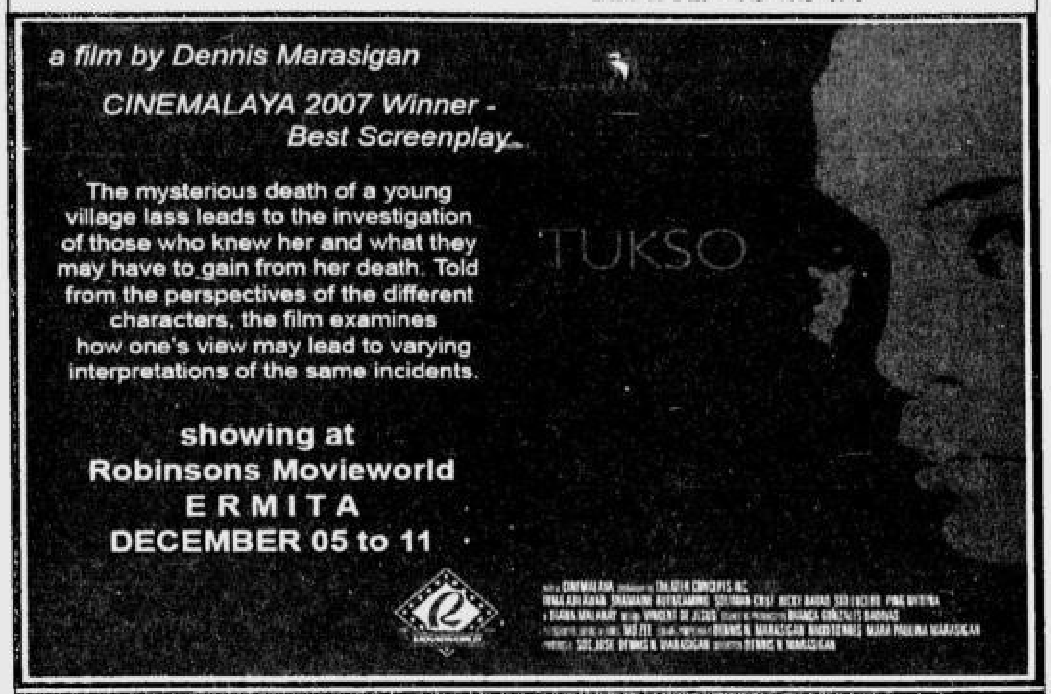

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3 BEOWULF 12:00 2:10 4:20
HITMAN 6:35 8:20 10:00

4 MR. MAGORIUM's 12:30 2:15
THE GOLDEN COMPASS 4:40 7:00 9:25

5 ONE MORE CHANCE
12:40 2:55 5:10 7:25 9:40

6 THE KINGDOM 11:35 1:40 3:45
ENCHANTED 5:50 7:55 10:00

7 PASUKOB
12:20 2:20 4:20 6:20 8:20 10:00

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1 EASTERN PROMISES
12:25 2:20 4:15 6:10 8:05 10:00

2 BATANES
12:40 3:00 5:20 7:40 10:00

3 THE GOLDEN COMPASS
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1 ENCHANTED
1:00 3:00 5:00 7:00 9:00

2 PASUKOB
12:30 2:40 4:50 7:00 9:10

3 ONE MORE CHANCE
11:20 1:40 4:00 6:25 9:00

4 THE KINGDOM
12:05 2:15 4:25 6:35 9:00

5 BEOWULF 12:30 2:35
HITMAN 5:00 7:00 9:00

6 THE GOLDEN COMPASS
1:40 4:10 6:40

7 THE GOLDEN COMPASS
11:10 1:40 4:10 6:40 9:10

8 BATANES
11:50 2:10 4:30 6:50 9:10

NOVALICHES

[illegible] P100 935-3231 / 935-3229-30

1 THE GOLDEN COMPASS
2 PASUKOB
3 ENCHANTED
4 BATANES

PIONEER

[illegible] 687-5370

1 THE GOLDEN COMPASS
2 THE GOLDEN COMPASS
3 PASUKOB
4 BATANES

STA. ROSA

Ticket Price P80 / P90 (049) 837-0907

1 THE GOLDEN COMPASS
2 FRED CLAUS
3 PASUKOB
4 BATANES

LIPA

Ticket Price (043) 757-3664
P90 (043) 312-5870

1 THE GOLDEN COMPASS
2 PASUKOB
3 LIONS FOR LAMBS
4 BATANES

DASMARINAS

Ticket Price P80 / P90 (046) 416-4332

1 GAEM PLAN
2 HITMAN
3 THE GOLDEN COMPASS
4 PASUKOB
5 BATANES

IMUS

Ticket Price P100 (046) 875-3838 (046) 471-8188

1 PASUKOB
2 THE KINGDOM
3 THE GOLDEN COMPASS
4 BATANES

ANGELES

Ticket Price P90 / P95 (045) 892-2346

1 GAME PLAN
2 PASUKOB
3 BATANES
4 THE GOLDEN COMPASS

TARLAC

1 THE GOLDEN COMPASS
2 BEOWULF
3 BATANES

STARMILLS

Ticket Price P80 / P90 (045) 875-1927

1 ENCHANTED
2 BATANES
3 ONE MORE CHANCE
4 PASUKOB
5 GAME PLAN
6 THE GOLDEN COMPASS

BACOLOD

Ticket Price P70 (034) 441-0459

1 THE GOLDEN COMPASS
2 GAME PLAN
3 indieSine: KONTRA AGOS / PASUKOB
4 WE OWN THE NIGHT
5 LIONS FOR LAMB
6 BATANES

ILOILO

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1 THE GOLDEN COMPASS
2 THE KINGDOM
3 PASUKOB
4 GAME PLAN
5 BATANES
6 WE OWN THE NIGHT

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Robinsons Movieworld IndieSine GALLERIA and BACOLOD

Kontra-AGOS

Children find their voice. . .

From page J1

leeway in expression—especially in media's adult-dominated world.

Youthful twist

Every second Sunday of December, the child, heretofore an unheralded accessory, is suddenly thrust into a stellar role: Dramatic features and musical variety programs suddenly revolve around kids; newscasts get a youthful twist from young news readers, and many documentaries focus on children! The Unicef is making sure this timely trend is highlighted worldwide.

In the Philippines, ICDB takes extra significance this year with the recent activation of the National Council for Children's Television, a bureau attached to the Department of Education created by virtue of a 1997 legislation (RA 8370)—that remained in the bureaucratic freezer!

For 10 years, critics and children's advocates decried the political indifference to children. The council has officially partnered with Anak TV to encourage TV stations to give Filipino kids their due in broadcasting: A louder voice and more significant presence on television!

The Anak TV Seal awards are traditionally staged in December, and timed with the observance of ICDB. Suddenly, we see TV plugs reminding viewers of children's rights!

Agenda

Through the years, Anak TV has been pushing its agenda quietly, not only through seminars and symposia on TV literacy and the assessment of TV programs for child-sensitivity, but also through its novel "Batang Brodkaster" derby.

Inspired by the One-Minute Video movement in Europe, Filipino kids are enticed to record the world around them. Using digital and analog cameras and video-equipped mobile phones, children document their environment and submit their work for the world to see.

Last year, a grade-school student from Miriam College used her mobile phone's camera to document her shocking take on hentai, the pornographic form of anime on the Internet. Raquel Correa, 12, along with fellow winner from Baguio Achievers' Academy, Francis Villanueva, 11, won "Batang Brodkaster's" top prizes. Correa's work later competed at the Basel Forum in Switzerland.

Boundaries

Because many of today's kids are tech-savvy, film has become the most ideal medium of expression for young people. Its visual language needs no translation and can therefore easily cross geographical, cultural and religious boundaries.

Since 2003, these one-minute video productions have become the craze in many countries worldwide. The process begins as a five-day workshop for 12- to 18-year-old kids. The sessions run on limited means, but are wellsprings of youthful energy and imagination.

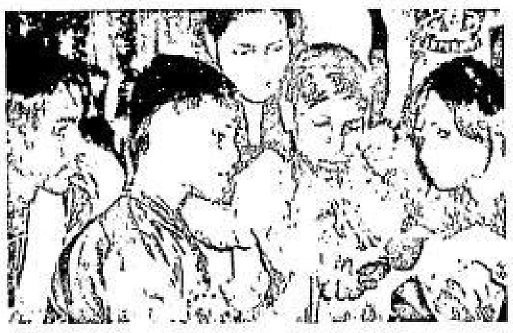
In Delhi last August, children from a nomadic Rajasthani community went through the program with their well-off peers from the city. Surprisingly, the nomadic kids, who had never before used a videocam, produced the more evocative films!

Results

Unicef supports many such gatherings around the globe. Children get training in story development and basic editing, guidance in camera skills and shot-and-sound selection. The results are engaging video materials that portray their self-image, problems and dreams from their own perspective—without adult interference!

This year, workshops and festivals highlighting the concept of one-minute video production were staged in cities like Bucharest, Dubai, Amman and Mumbai. A five-day summer camp in New York organized by the nonprofit group, Global Kids, also yielded fascinating videos.

It may not just yet generate the kind of attention that Hollywood films are getting, but children's media is fast becoming a sensation that could soon be hard to ignore!



RAJASTHANI nomadic children in a huddle during a video workshop.

SHANG CINEPLEX

1 GOLDEN COMPASS
MTRCB GP
12:50, 3:50, 6:50, 9:50

2 GOLDEN COMPASS
MTRCB GP
12:20, 6:20, 9:20

3 ENCHANTED
MTRCB GP 11:50,
2:15, 4:40, 7:05, 9:30

4 THE KINGDOM
MTRCB R-13
12:40, 3:00, 5:20, 7:40, 10:00

PREMIERE THEATRE
HITMAN / BEOWULF
MTRCB R-13 / PG-13
1:00, 3:10, 5:20 / 7:30, 10:00

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GP // R-13

CINEMA 2 EASTERN PROMISES
11:00 , 1:20 , 3:40
6:00 , 8:20 , 10:35
R-13

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NOW SHOWING

CINEMA 3 THE GOLDEN COMPASS
11:20 , 2:10 , 5:00
7:50 , 10:40
GP

CINEMA 4 THE KINGDOM
11:00 , 1:20 , 3:40
6:00 , 8:20 , 10:35
R-13

CINEMA 5 THE GOLDEN COMPASS
10:40 , 1:30 , 4:20
7:10 , 10:00
GP

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MUSIC MUSEUM

December 7 & 8 , 2007	" Into the Woods " musical	8:00 PM
December 14 , 2007	Mark Herras	8:00 PM
December 15 , 2007	The Company	8:00 PM
December 19 , 2007	Pilita Corales , Dolphy , Malou Barry	8:30 PM

TEATRINO
PROMENADE GREENHILLS

December 20, 2007	Jed Madela	8:00 PM
December 8, 28 & 29 , 2007	Drag - Ons	10:00 PM

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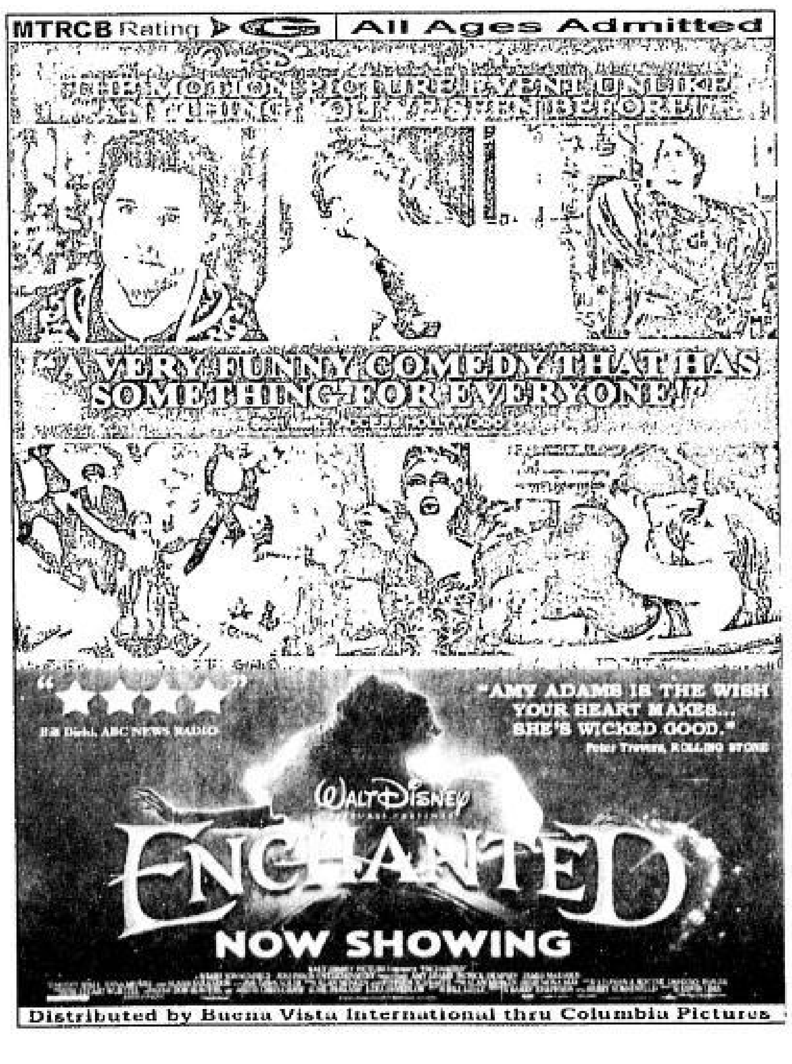
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NOW SHOWING
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JANET STOKES, FILM ADVISORY BOARD
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"FUN HOLIDAY CHEER FOR THE WHOLE FAMILY."
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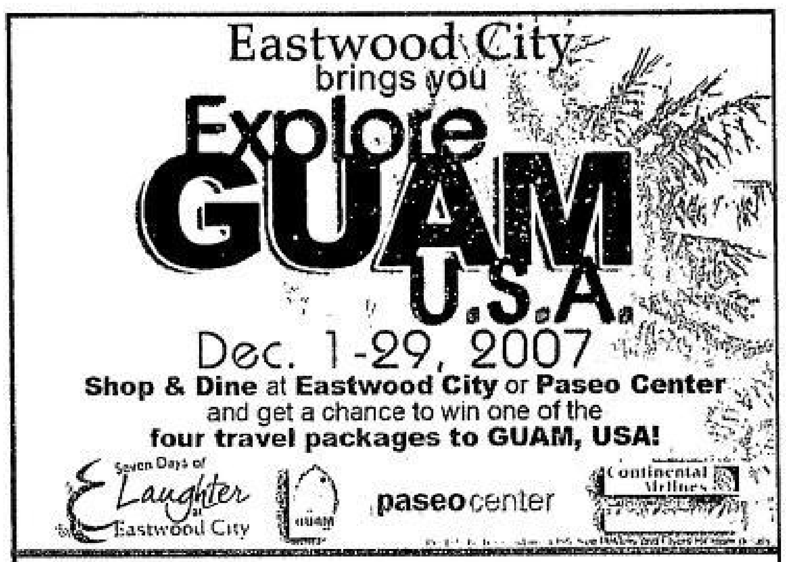
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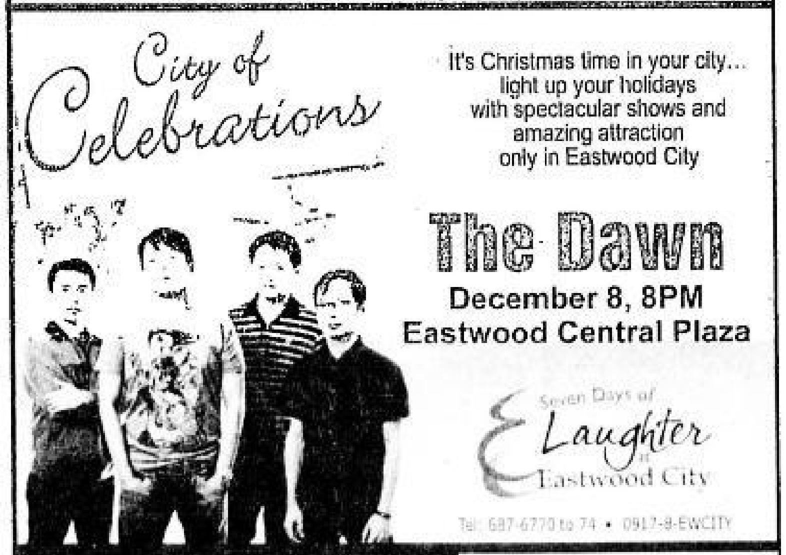
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1 ENCHANTED
2:35, 5:15, 7:55, 10:35
G

2 THE GOLDEN COMPASS
1:40, 4:40, 7:40, 10:40
PG-13

3 THE GOLDEN COMPASS
2:10, 5:10, 8:10, 11:10
PG-13

4 THE KINGDOM
2:35, 5:15, 7:55, 10:35
R-13

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1 THE GOLDEN COMPASS
2 ENCHANTED
3 BEOWULF / HITMAN
4 THE KINGDOM
PREMIERE
THE GOLDEN COMPASS

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1 THE GOLDEN COMPASS
2 THE KINGDOM
3 BATANES
4 PASUKOB

starmall EDSA-SHAW
(Mandaluyong) tel. 7260160
3 THE GOLDEN COMPASS
4 BATANES
5

metropolis star cinema
www.clickthecity.com.ph
(ALABANG) tel. 8504285, 8433094
1 BATANES
2 PASUKOB
3 THE GOLDEN COMPASS
4 BEOWULF

THEATRES
1 THE GOLDEN COMPASS
2 PASUKOB
3 BATANES

PACIFIC MALL LUCENA CINEMAGIC
Pacific Mall Lucena Tel (042) 660-5271
1 THE GOLDEN COMPASS
2 PASUKOB
3
4

Filinvest FESTIVAL CINEMA
(Muntinlupa) tel 850.3571 or 72
1 EASTERN PROMISES
2 THE GOLDEN COMPASS
3 PASUKOB / HITMAN
4 ENCHANTED
5 THE GOLDEN COMPASS
6 THE GOLDEN COMPASS
7 THE KINGDOM
8 RESERVED
9 ONE MORE CHANCE
10 BATANES

Blue Wave MARIKINA
Sumulong Highway cor. Mayor Gil Fernando Street, Sto. Niño, Marikina City tel. 9041937
1 THE GOLDENT COMPASS
2 BATANES
3 THE GOLDENT COMPASS
4 PASUKOB

SUPER CINERAMA
Isetann Cinerama Complex Recto tel 7334228
1 RESERVED
2 RESERVED
3 RESERVED
4 THE GOLDENT COMPASS
5 BATANES

MARKETPLACE
Mandaluyong tel 533.3851 / 533.3856
1 BATANES
2 30 DAYS OF NIGHT
3 ONE MORE CHANCE
4 PASUKOB

Masagana CINEMA
(Pasay) tel 833.3290 / 833.3274
1 PASUKOB
2 THE GOLDENT COMPASS
3 BATANES

Center Mall Cinema
Bagulo Center Mall, Magsaysay Avenue (Baguio City) tel (074)- (4449346)
1 LIONS FOR LAMBS / BEOWULF
2 THE GOLDENT COMPASS

Jade Cinema
(Angeles City) tel (045) 887.5001 to 03
1 THE GOLDENT COMPASS
2 BATANES
3 PASUKOB
4 GAME PLAN

Centre Plaza Cinema
(Balanga, Bataan) tel (047) 237.7007
1 PASUKOB
2 BATANES

EASTWOOD CINEMAS
(Eastwood City Walk 2, Eastwood City E. Rodriguez Jr. Ave (C-5) Quezon City) tel 687.6963 or 72
1 ENCHANTED
2 THE GOLDENT COMPASS
3 THE GOLDENT COMPASS
4 THE KINGDOM

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Cinema 2000 Waltermart
(Calamba) tel (049) 545.7383
1 BATANES
2 PASUKOB
3 THE GOLDENT COMPASS
4

Cinema 2000 Pavilion Mall
(Biñan) tel. (049) 4111146
1 RESERVED
2 RESERVED
3 RESERVED
4 RESERVED

Cinema 2000 Cinemagix
(Urdaneta) tel(075) 568.6771
1 BATANES
2 PASUKOB
3 THE GOLDENT COMPASS

Cinema 2000 Metrotown
(Tarlac) tel (045) 982.1729
1 BATANES
2 PASUKOB
3 THE GOLDENT COMPASS
4 BEOWULF

Cinema 2000 Waltermart
(Plaridel) tel (044) 795.3320
1 GOLDEN COMPASS
2 BATANES
3 PASUKOB

Cinema 2000 Waltermart
(Gapan) tel. (044) 4867736
1 BATANES
2 PASUKOB

Lianas Cinema
(Pasig) tel 640.4748
1 GHOST SON
2 ONE MORE CHANCE

Lianas Cinema
(Alabang) tel 850.1276
1 BATANES
2 SABIK SA PAG IBIG
3 LAMAT
4 PASUKOB

Lianas MovieCity
(Calamba) tel (049) 545.7202
1 THE GOLDEN COMPASS
2 SEX SCANDAL
3 BATANES
4 PASUKOB
5 THE GOLDEN COMPASS

Fiesta World Mall
(Lipa) tel (043) 981.0790
1 THE GOLDEN COMPASS
2 BATANES
3 PASUKOB
4 BEOWULF

Berma Cinema
(Baclaran) tel 879.2030 / 879.2029
1 PLEASE CALL
2

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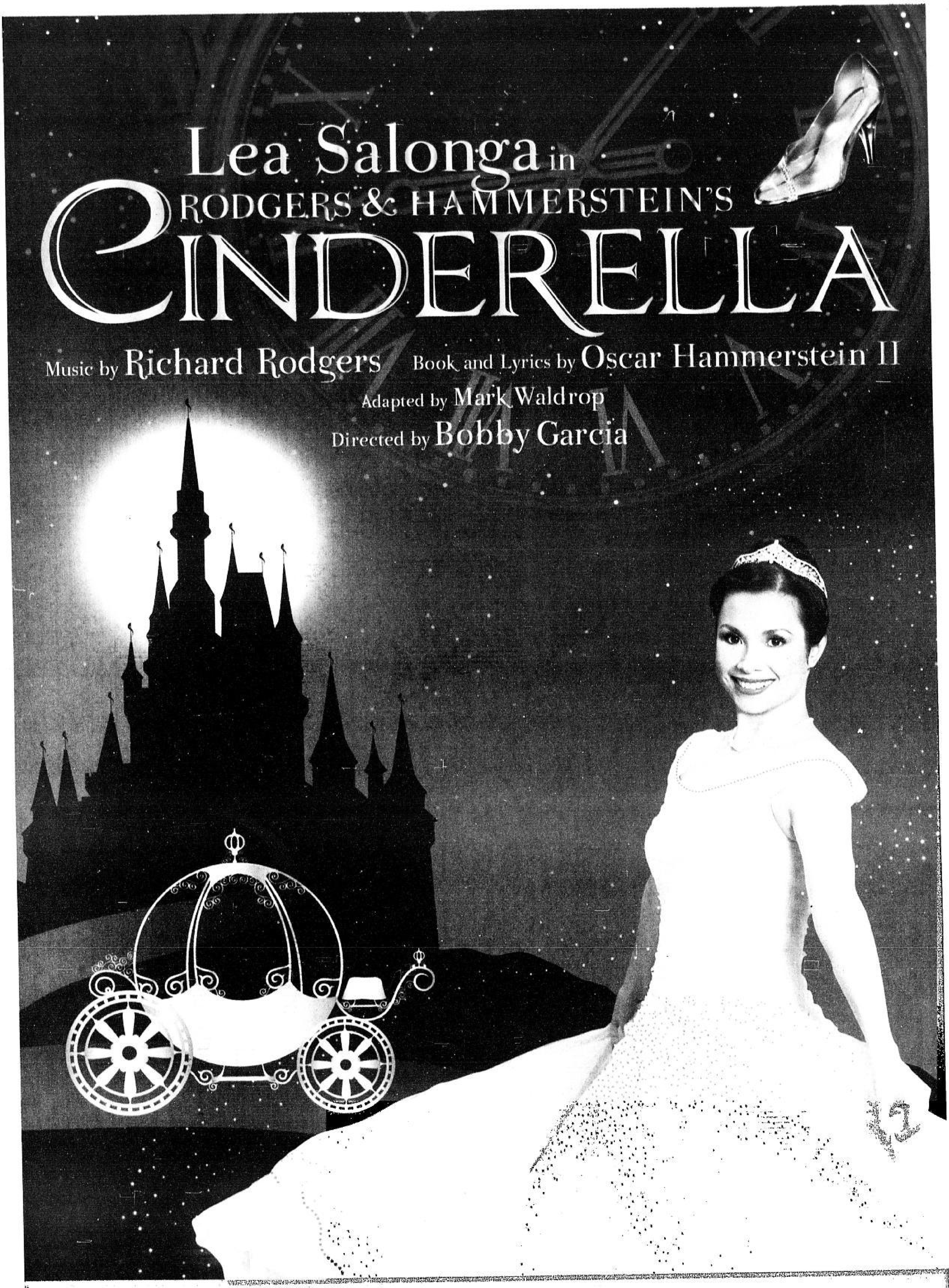
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